

**VIEWS OF THEATRE
IN IRELAND 1995**



VIEWS OF THEATRE IN IRELAND 1995
Report of the Arts Council Theatre Review

Foreword

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International Perspectives

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The Graduate School of Business

University College Dublin

Coventry School

Theatre and Cultural Studies Centre

A String of Life

A Profile of Drama and Theatre Practice

Interviewing Young People and the Broader Community

Compiled by Colleen O'Sullivan

 **REPORT OF THE
ARTS COUNCIL
THEATRE REVIEW**



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Report of the Arts Council Theatre Review

An Chomhairle Ealaíonn/The Arts Council

Theatre Review 1995 - 1996

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This document is the first part of a process, which will take a year to complete. Publication of this report will be followed by a sequence of consultation meetings to be held at national and local level, between December 1995 and February 1996. Details of these meetings are set out in Appendix 4 of the final section.

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VIEWS OF THEATRE IN IRELAND

Report of the Arts Council Theatre Review

- 5** **Foreword**
Ciarán Benson, Chairperson of the Arts Council
- 11** **International Perspectives**
Essays by Neil Wallace, Helena Kaut-Howson and Eduard Delgado
- 13 The Four Estaits
Neil Wallace
- 27 Flowers Among the Ruins - Identity and the Theatre
Helena Kaut-Howson
- 47 The Music the Stranger Hears
Eduard Delgado
- 59** **Theatre in Ireland**
A research project conducted by
The Business Research Programme
The Graduate School of Business
University College Dublin
in association with
Coopers and Lybrand Corporate Finance
- 199** **A Doing of Life**
A Profile of Drama and Theatre Practices involving
Young People and the Broader Community
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FOREWORD

Ciarán Benson
Chairperson
The Arts Council

Foreword

Inertia sometimes saves a system, but more often than not renders it inflexible and unresponsive. It did not take the present Arts Council long after assuming office to realise that the types of decision it was meant to make and the range of options it had to choose between need not necessarily be those that had worked well in the past. In coming to grips with our statutory brief we formed the view that across the arts the landscape was rapidly changing but that the quality of the shapes it was assuming was often very unclear. Were we to think of ourselves as Capability Browns who should re-model and re-contour our fields according to some harmonious masterplan or as benevolent governors who with meagre resources responded to the many citizen farmers in a piecemeal way and who allowed the landscape as a whole to develop as it would without a governing vision?

In preparing the Arts Plan 1995-97 we implicitly decided in favour of coherence but of a particular kind, or rather from a particular source; neither the Arts Council alone or the arts community alone but both together in the most creative way. With a minimal level of staff who had to cope with a relentlessly expanding range of demands, and a voluntary council, we acknowledged our limitation from the beginning. Many of the questions we asked had no available answers and without such answers we found it very difficult to frame our policies. Theatre and drama highlighted our dilemma. In our first year of office we spent an anxious time realising that the growth of the independent theatre sector, the needs of the National Theatre Society, the Gate and the rest of the theatre world was in all likelihood fast out-stripping the resources available to nurture and sustain it. Starkly presented, were we to cut and concentrate, or dripfeed and starve, or put all of our efforts into campaigning for a bigger cake and temporarily stave off the necessity of either type of choice. The Arts Council does not need to be convinced that a lot more by way of resources is needed; but together with the arts community we need to convince government, both political and civil, that these are worthy ways to spend taxpayers' money. This was the purpose of the Arts Plan 1995 -1997, as well as *The Public and the Arts* and *The Employment and Economic Significance of the Cultural Industries in Ireland*, all of which were published in 1994.

At the same time, we were being made aware by the theatre sector that there seemed to be an underlying problem with audiences and with the state of the infrastructure for theatre in Ireland. The quality of the work and the numbers of people working in theatre across the country was growing all the time. But nobody knew enough to have the sort of confident overview that would assist us in planning how best to support theatre in Ireland. The world of theatre itself was disunited and did not speak for itself with a clear voice. The reasons for this may have had to do with a territoriality induced by inadequate resources but it

may also have had to do with the lack of the an occasion or opportunity to collaboratively work towards a consensus on the best interests of Irish theatre in the coming years.

The present review is the Arts Council's attempt to create a climate out of which some lineaments of possible consensus might emerge. In the most succinct terms the process is one of review - debate/consultation - policymaking. This document is the first part of a process that will take at least a year.

The process is new and the document is deliberately experimental. To have followed the usual path and commissioned a single expert-author report on 'Theatre in Ireland' would have missed the point and an opportunity. No single viewpoint, in my opinion, could do justice to the richness of perspectives currently at play in Irish theatre nor are a single set of recommendations what we need just now. The way forward must come from frank, open and informed dialogue. Change will be required of all involved including the Arts Council. To achieve a context for constructive debate this publication is deliberately and explicitly inconclusive. Its job is to open up and not to shut down debate. It is a document of many voices and that ensures that in the text, most points of view should find some sympathetic resonance.

It is in two parts. There is an empirical core in the form of the largest ever collection of data and opinions on theatre in Ireland. This was opened to competitive application and the consortium of UCD and Coopers and Lybrand won the contract. Both have accumulated expertise over recent years on the social and economic dimensions of the arts in Ireland. Although appointed by the Arts Council to carry out this part of the review, they did so independently and at arms' length. As such this section is theirs and as objective as is possible in the circumstances. Their findings are very authoritative in that the response rate from those surveyed was exceptionally good by normal survey standards. Areas covered include the available resources for Irish theatre, funding, repertoire, touring, audiences, the National Theatre society and the Arts Council. Paired with this report is a second section compiled by Declan German which offers an outline of theatre for young people in all its variety together with a description of amateur and community drama. Appendices to this section include a description of the contribution of FAS to the theatre world. Taken together this report contains the richest and most comprehensive description of the infrastructure of theatre and drama ever compiled and published in Ireland.

Some people whose concerns are not primarily with the infrastructural aspects of theatre organisation might find this detail a little indigestible. So we asked three distinguished people from outside Ireland to come and visit Ireland, to talk to whomever they liked, to see whatever theatre they wished to see, to read whatever documentary information was available, and to write a personal essay which looked forward for the next five years or so. Neil Wallace, Helena Kaut-Howson and Eduard Delgado agreed to do this and have visited Ireland a number of times over the last few months and have entered into the spirit of the

review process with enthusiasm and independence of mind. Their personal essays are intended to kick start the interpretative side of the coming debate and consultation.

Views of Theatre in Ireland 1995 is exactly that - views, and there are many legitimate ones. Not everybody will like what they find. Speaking for ourselves in the Arts Council, the criticisms of our funding policies and practice come as no surprise at all. We arrived at these opinions ourselves in the course of the internal examination which we carried out on ourselves last year. It was precisely because of our own awareness of these problems that we instigated the whole process of which this review is the start. Coherence of vision for itself from within the expert world of theatre practice would be greatly welcomed by the Arts Council. The alternative is the one we often face whereby all the hot chestnuts which can not be solved by the theatre world are shunted for Solomon-type solution on to the table of the understaffed Arts Council. Maybe at the end of this process of review and consultation we will come to the conclusion that this is how it must inevitably be. But our hope is for more than this; we want the best for Irish theatre and that means knowing whether Irish theatre has a viable collective vision for itself. 86% of those surveyed were of the view that the level of interaction and contact between the different areas of theatre was poor and 73% believe in the need for a body to represent the interests of theatre in Ireland. At the same time 73% agree that progress rather than decline has characterised Irish theatre over the last decade.

We all agree on the urgent need for better funding for the arts including theatre and the need for better conditions of employment and less reliance on the 'hidden subsidy' of theatre workers' cheap labour. But there are other problems such as standards of marketing, audience development, training, touring, repertoire, the implications of consolidating existing companies, the relationship between a National Theatre and theatre throughout the nation, the role of FAS schemes, the extremely low contribution of local authorities, quality and rationalisation, promoting Irish theatre internationally, the relations of theatre, film and television, capital investment, and so on.

If the arts world, including theatre, can fight its corner intelligently and in unison that is the best way to address the question of securing adequate funding. That case will be greatly helped, and bodies like the Arts Council will be able to work more effectively for theatre in Ireland, if the theatre world has its own voice. This review and the consultative process of which it is a part is the Arts Council's attempt to create the conditions for that voice to strengthen and be heard. The extraordinary contribution that theatre and drama can make to civil life needs us all to give this debate our best constructive efforts.

We undertook to complete and publish this review in a very short time. Our solitary officer for theatre, Phelim Donlon, has done extraordinary work on behalf of theatre over the years and the gratitude of all is due to him. I would also like to thank Declan Gorman who agreed at short notice to co-ordinate the review

process and to compile the final section to this publication. Without his energy and conscientious effort, well assisted by Frances Ryan, we could not have got this far in so short a time. My colleagues in theatre on the Council, Eithne Healy, Mary-Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy and Paraic Breathnach, formed a steering committee to assist in the process and this was ably steered by Vie Merriman. Finally may I thank all from the theatre world who participated in the construction of the empirical research and who by the completeness of their replies have made this the most complete piece of research yet done on the infrastructure of theatre in Ireland.

Ciarán Benson
November 1995

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECT

Neil Wallace

Helena Kaut-Howson

Eduard Delgado

Neil Wallace

Neil Wallace is Director of Offshore, an independent limited company based in Amsterdam, which specialises in international production, co-production and special projects in the performing arts. Among his current projects are: Les Danaïdes, (a co-production for the Holland Festival, Wienerfestwochen, Festival d'Avignon, La Villette, Paris and other partners); and The Tempest, (a co-production by Nottingham Playhouse, Theatr Clwyd, and Hebbel Theatr, Berlin). Other projects include tours and productions for the National Theatre of Craiova, Romania; the Wrestling School; Brith Gof; and the Dutch company, Orkater. Offshore also runs training projects for cultural managers from the Eastern and Central European regions and is a participating member of NOROC, the British-Romanian Theatre Exchange Programme

From 1991 to 1994 he was Programme Director of Tramway in Glasgow and between 1987 and 1991, he was Deputy Director of the Festivals Office of Glasgow City Council, the unit responsible for co-ordinating and implementing the city's 1990 Cultural Capital of Europe programme.

Before that, he was Director of the Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff; Theatre Development Officer with Lincolnshire and Humberside Arts; Administrator of the First International Scottish Puppet Festival and he has worked as an actor, musician and live art performer.

THE FOUR ESTAITS

Neil Wallace

PREFACE

I accepted the invitation to take part in this review for three reasons. First, my long-standing love and respect for so much of the work I had seen in Ireland over previous years (some of which we presented in Cardiff and Glasgow). Second, a professional fascination for the theatre cultures of small countries, especially those of Celtic origin and on the periphery of Europe. And third, the unusually creative and thorough approach being taken by the Arts Council to the whole review process. This is exemplary and should be widely copied.

After the first couple of field trips to the Republic, I immediately began to have doubts. What could an essayist say about the difficulties facing theatre makers in Ireland that wouldn't better be dealt with in a full-length book, preferably written by Fintan O'Toole? What value could a series of snapshot observations, impulsive conclusions, rash international comparisons bring to a complex cultural question like this? How to hold the thin line between superficiality and pragmatism, even arrogance?

It was actually the discussion with Irish theatre people - hours and hours of them which reassured me. The outsider's impression was important: I was encouraged to be provocative, opinionated, and not to forget the value of endorsing the many qualities of what was being done, where and by whom throughout Irish theatre.

The more I heard and read, the more I was struck by the *entities* into which Irish theatre breaks. There are very distinct boundaries, four of them, between the state; the Arts Council; the Abbey and the Gate; and the independent sector - i.e. almost everybody else. All the discussions held reflected or reinforced this in some way. Reminded of the "estaitis" in Scottish political history, it seemed a good way to divide what I eventually wrote. Of course the theatre community should really be one estait, and perhaps this review will bring to light some of the reasons why it isn't.

The compass of this review is astonishing. I hope it won't be wasted. Somewhere there is a graveyard for arts council and ministry publications where many 'fundamental reviews', three, four, five year plans, studies and all the rest of it lie rotting. This tends to happen because the exercise is accepted as a substitute for action, or worse, the objectives are misconceived by planners or simply unachievable. The publication of this review marks the start of consultation, not its completion. The theatre community of Ireland must influence changes as far as it can. But it must

also insist that whatever changes are implemented are translated into the vocabulary of their everyday, working life and needs. For this to happen, some kind of shared understanding of true and false solutions must be made. The greatest challenge will be to ensure that the Irish Theatre Review published in 2005 won't be obsessed by the same problems, only ten years older.

I would like to thank all of those who took the time to meet and talk, sometimes at very odd and inconvenient hours. Above all, I wish to thank Declan German, Coordinator of the Review, whose advice, tireless enthusiasm, articulacy and sheer practical help have made involvement in the review process so stimulating. The Irish theatre profession should be glad that the co-ordination to publication stage of this review has been in his capable and scrupulous hands.

Neil Wallace, Amsterdam 2 November 1995

THE FIRST ESTATT

THE NATION

"What are the secrets of a vibrant, healthy theatre community in a small nation?" This question began the review and stayed, in one way or another, throughout all the conversations with practitioners. By the end of many hours talking in Dublin, Cork, Waterford, and Galway, it was clear that the secrets had a lot to do with questions of infrastructure.

Infrastructure should provide cohesion and a foundation for daily practice of those with common objectives. Applied to an artform, it is a strange fish: not just buildings, because many of its components are invisible. Where they are found (in the Netherlands for example), they are silent resources - understood, acknowledged, expressed in the way the theatre community interacts and behaves. Here are some tests of infrastructure. What is the ethos of theatre-making in Ireland? Is it artistically confident? Do its practitioners feel part of a national community? Do individual artists have the prospect of a career, or are they compelled to leave to pursue one? Are the partners needed by artists and companies readily available? How, and how often, do theatre-makers meet to celebrate their success?

Theatre in Ireland often measures brilliantly against the first of those infrastructural questions, especially when compared to the theatre communities of its nearest anglophone neighbours in Wales, Scotland and England. Ethos may be difficult to define but is - to the observer at least - the essence of everything one sees and hears on the Irish stage. The centrality of the writer and the word to Irish culture, to the nation, is not just historical, but present. Together with the musician, the writer transmits the dominant cultural signal of Ireland to the

world. In the theatre, this is without parallel in Europe, even in England, whose Shakespearean, Jacobean, and 20th century dramatic heritage - often regarded as a gift to the world stage - will always be peripheral to its sense of nationhood. In the west and north of the UK, Welsh and Scottish theatres are more central to the identities of their countries, though without Ireland's generations of mature stage writers and, with an envious eye on the wealth of astonishingly talented actors in the republic. There is a nation-wide sense of creative energy, bottomless ambition, ideas, artistic will. The talent base is substantial, in some respects awesome. It is loud, it is articulate, it is local, it is relevant, it is mysterious, it is rough, it is fine. But in almost every other respect the infrastructural weaknesses are so severe that Irish theatre is in danger of being less than the sum of its parts: occasionally wonderful, but intermittently so, condemned, outside Dublin especially, to a *bonsai* existence, successful despite the wear and tear of isolation, struggle, and poor support.

“Poor support” isn't a synonym for “underfunded”. Of course adequate levels of funding figure in any analysis of infrastructure, but money does not, ever, create infrastructure by itself. Because underfunding affects so many of the profession in Ireland - 62% of the sample in this report agreed with the statement “any problems in Irish theatre are primarily caused by inadequate funding” - it is an immediate problem. But it is not one of the enduring and more important underlying ones. Asked to define priorities for the *use* of additional funding, the same sample could only reach 17% consensus on a single issue. This suggests that a substantial increase in theatre funding, though it is needed desperately, would trigger 1001 privately conceived development plans, and not a strategic one to strengthen the profession nationally. This would not guarantee genuine growth, mainly because - as British and some other European experience has shown - today's quantum leaps in subsidy quickly turn into tomorrow's cries of underfunding. It is an abnormally scrupulous arts organisation which uses real grant increases as adequate support for what it currently does. So the argument for more cash exists, but should be complemented by attention to other structural issues in the domain of public culture. What are these?

First, the Arts Council itself. The degree of isolated responsibility which this body, together with the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, bears on behalf of the state and its communities is very striking to the outsider. This is a problem for the nation as a whole. The Arts Council fields criticism on details of policy or funding choices (naturally, because these are common to any democratic system of arts patronage). But it must also take responsibility for a much stronger current of frustration which has only one address in which to head. This is invidious, because the Council becomes, in perhaps dramatic terms, the pain-carrier for problems which might properly be shared with the state. To this extent the Council seems as much a victim of national infrastructural weaknesses as the clients whose long-term problems it cannot solve. Where are its peer public sector partners? Who, or what body, interacts with the private sector? What can, or does, partnership with local authorities actually yield?

The Arts Council seems to be the key component in a dysfunctional cultural system. Even if it achieves modest increases, it must be remembered that these are calculated on an extremely low base. It is the *combined* level of state, local authority, business and private support to the arts in Ireland which is inadequate. The changes to the tax-raising powers of Irish local authorities after the election of 1977 compromised the capacity of local government to become the highest aggregate public spenders on culture as they are in all countries of the UK. Companies like Red Kettle, Bickerstaffe, Island, Punchbag and even Druid receive next to nothing from the local authorities whose districts they grace and for whose communities they work. Apart from what this tells us about the financial constraints facing local government in *all* of its cultural work, it reduces the leverage of Arts Council funding, often to zero, and undermines the stability and confidence of theatre companies, presenters and artists.

The most recent source of substantial new revenue for Irish theatre is FAS, now spending almost £13 million annually on cultural activity. This is £2 million less than the Arts Council spends on activities. But this is not the scheme's primary purpose, so does it strengthen long-term institutional or creative capacity? Opinion is divided about its value: some believe it extends community reach or amplifies the artistic presence of local groups. Some young FAS beneficiaries make it into the profession, and certain arts organisations tackle work which might otherwise be left untouched. Few theatre professionals saw it as anything other than a tempting expedient. If this is true, FAS' impact on infrastructure is potentially dangerous since it currently conceals needs whilst giving the illusion of progress, and will aggravate the severity of today's problems in the future. The Arts Council should, together with FAS, take a line on the implications of this massive *pro tern* investment. Could the regulations of an employment scheme be adapted to in any way to suit the cultural sector?

Irish theatre has a haphazard relationship with the business community. Despite the influence of Cothu, and the Sponsor of the Year Awards, there is no well-resourced incentive scheme to persuade business and industry to become and remain sponsors. Cynics scoff at sponsorship because it is "unwholesome", lets government off the hook, and is no reliable substitute for institutional public support. They are often right to be cautious. But imaginative and pioneering sponsorship, wisely sought and intelligently used, can fortify the funding portfolio of theatre organisations without artistic compromise. Recent research in the UK suggests that over 80% of first time arts sponsors continue or expand their giving, and the Association of Business Sponsorship for the Arts' Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme - which matches equally any first time sponsorship up to a value of £30,000 - now brings over £5 million a year *into the system*. Claims that the Irish business world is either too poor or disinterested in the arts to help is not borne out by the substantial sums raised for flagship events like Dublin's Cultural Capital year, or its millennium celebrations. Some new, effective body, with the experience to mediate between novice sponsorship-seeking theatre companies and novice sponsorship-giving businesses seems to be needed. To pump-prime, it has to have resources. £0.5 million would be a brave start.

Training is another key infrastructural issue. So far, the theatre community has been unable to provide an in-service programme of any regularity for itself. There are exceptions: the Abbey has strong links with Trinity College, and Macnas is about to embark on a pioneering in-house training programme. However, there is no consistent provider for the country, meaning that skills are unenhanced, no researched understanding of needs exists, and the cohesive effect of training programmes is missed.

A final point on national theatre infrastructure. Patrick Mason is right to claim that the National Theatre Society is integral to Ireland's theatrical life. In spite of the historical tensions between the National Theatre and the rest of the profession, the degree to which this organisation has nourished and enriched whatever is understood by "the Irish school" is incalculable. In the hue and cry of an exploding, sometimes resentful, theatre world, the Abbey's eccentric importance to theatre in the rest of Ireland may be lost sight of. The Society has a lot to do with the fact that the good things in Irish theatre are as good as they are. And more than ever before, it is necessary to take account of the exemplary force of what has been achieved at the Gate, both at home and on the international stage.

The most challenging question surrounding infrastructure is: who should be responsible for it? This turns into another question: how should a sustained approach to developing it be *organised*? It is surely unfair to expect the Arts Council to sustain or develop it single-handedly? How can local authorities be enabled to play a more strategic role? Should Irish theatre argue for informed and strategic incentives from the government like those provided to help the film industry? How should the task be shared?

THE SECOND ESTATT

THE ARTS COUNCIL

It has already been argued that the Council operates in a false, or at least incomplete arena. But it is never that simple, and the views of the theatre community about Arts Council policy and procedures expressed in this review speak for themselves. However, three points need to be made.

First, the Arts Council was the progenitor of this review and deserves substantial credit for exposing itself to the published opinion of a theatrical community for whom praise was unlikely to be a first priority. Second, a distinction should be made between a critique of the Council *qua* national structure and some of the individuals working for it. Respect for the Council's drama officer was a remarkable and consistent feature of many individuals' views, and support for his "predicament" was expressed frequently. In common with long-serving specialist directors of funding body departments, the job inherited differs beyond measure to the requirements today. In 1985, the Drama Department processed 34 success-

ful applicadons. In 1994, the number was 216. It is also worth pointing out that the Drama Officer's log shows that he attended almost every one of the 522 theatre productions listed in this review. This is a heroic effort, a selfless statement of moral support. But the Council's very successful efforts in controlling operating costs has almost certainly constricted the Drama Department's more strategic role over the last decade.

The third point is an observation about European arts funding structures in general which may soften some of the comments and perspectives of this document. The science of public support for culture in Europe since the war is a fascinating topic, and comparative studies are valuable and illuminating. But, if the history of national arts funding between 1945-2000 is ever written, the eighties and nineties are unlikely to feature as a Golden Age. We know the reasons for this because we are living them. When, in a decade's time perhaps, we examine the pressures on ministries or arts councils to deal with the enforced obligation of declining public expenditure, we shall learn a lot in retrospect. What happens to a national theatre community like Ireland's when the general tenor of response from its funding body is contraction, compromise, saying no, or at least, no more? It becomes demoralised and often divided. Of course its more complicated than that, because the funding body feels an obligation to go on being creative with the resources at its disposal, and to protect the institutions it values, of which it may even indirectly be the custodian. So even in hard and inflationary times, apparently huge subsidies remain sacrosanct, and small initiatives are still possible. But for those in the middle - the maturing artist or organisation - static funding, and the inability to resource its ambition *by almost any other means*, is a catastrophe. The resilience of these under-supported organisations, not least their psychological stamina is remarkable. But its not infinite.

The Irish Arts Council, in common with the national funders in Scotland, Wales and England, has suffered the pain, and often the ignominy, of twisting outdated structures and habits of giving to cope with the shortfall. It should be commended for keeping its proportion of overhead costs so low, though this may have been at the cost of its ability to talk to the field, and may - ironically for some in the theatre world - be worth a review.

Perhaps the Arts Council could lighten its workload, and contribute to long-term development by a sweeping deregulation or delegation of funds currently held centrally? The regional clamour in this document for new models of touring and distribution is difficult to ignore. There is, amongst presenters, great pressure to amend the allocation of funds to allow some of them to fulfil their own creative potential. This implies a move away from the outmoded circuit of passive, often reluctant venues, to the development of regional or national consortia of creative networks. From both the funding body and the independent company point of view, aspects of this shift in policy can be alarming: it transfers some of the artistic judgement to the producer/programmer; it runs the risk of upsetting traditional relationships because the presenter's priorities are new; it leaves the question of equality of distribution (the pins on maps so crucial to the annual accountability

of the funding body) to free-ranging, unpredictable forces. But experience in the USA with the National Performance Network, or amongst the smaller cultural centres in Flanders, or the venue network in the Netherlands and even, very recently, in England, shows the rewards which such a policy can bring. It strengthens relationships, and hence the work, of independent companies with the presenters. It is by far the best way of building audiences long term. It can offer the prospect, dreamed-of amongst independent theatre makers in Ireland, of genuine co production, by which an independent company receives support in cash or kind from a network of presenters whose investment in the project is an investment, a statement of ownership. Often, the greatest difficulty in such a switch is in the minds of the funding structures, reluctant to “lose control” of patterns of distribution or quality. The opinions of the theatre community suggest that there would be less to worry about on both these fronts if they were, even in part, delegated to the field. Any of course there is nothing to prevent the Arts Council monitoring the artistic success of network production.

THE THIRD ESTATT

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

“The attempt to undermine the National Theatre has been determined and sustained over the last decade, and it continues to this day. Its worst consequence is that it has provoked a defensiveness in the Society itself which has impeded the regeneration vital for artistic health.... I detect that the Society, or rather “the Abbey “ is sensed as a self-perpetuating, self-appointed group that eats up the lion’s share of funding, leaving only crumbs for other companies. The facts give the lie to this caricature.”
Patrick Mason, The National Theatre, Artistic Policy, Part One.

“What’s my beef about the Abbey? Totally irrelevant to my life or what’s happening in Ireland. I have my own problems to deal with.”
(Interviewee in Waterford)

“I’m getting fed up with all the Abbey-bashing, to be quite honest”.
(Interviewee in Galway)

“Does paranoia go with the job?”
(Questioner to Patrick Mason during the December 1994 Abbey debate.)

Two important points should be made about the National Theatre Society at the outset. The first - a matter of judgement - is that the Abbey is far from overfunded in comparison with other national theatres. The second - a matter of fact - the Society is lucky to have one of the most talented stage directors in the English- language theatre at its head.

National theatres are not by nature vehicles of unity. In fact apartness is one of their functions. They are not established apologetically, but with grandilo-

quence, upward sounding language (“high ambition”), and an implied aim to be exemplary and demonstrate leadership. The national theatre must exert an aspirational force for the most talented artists of the nation, who in turn help maintain its allure and specialness. But how do you tell a successful national theatre from an unsuccessful one? The typically bad national theatre will have been built by decree, probably very recently, and more a testimony to the Edifice complex than a living vessel for a thriving school of artistic excellence; it will, in Howard Barker’s phrase, “reinforce the governing artistic morality”, ignoring or flirting uneasily with innovation and experiment. And it will probably have a declining audience. A healthy national theatre will consolidate repertoire, inspire the ambitious, aim uncompromisingly for the highest standards, reject dross whilst supporting artistic promise, express something intangible but shared about nationhood, embrace newness and risk, and frequently sell out performances.

How well the Abbey, or any national theatre scores against these or any other criteria is never a matter of consensus. It depends on your standpoint. And that has perhaps been the greatest source of political strain for the Abbey in recent times: overwhelming pressure and expectation, from every point of the profession to be the perfect national theatre. Just being a decent one is hard enough.

For any artistic director determined to make the Abbey alive and relevant, the force of history is daunting. The Abbey’s stakeholders include the ghosts of its founders; the entire repertoire of the Irish school; the aspirant writer, director, designer; the Irish language and its lobby; all of its employees and shareholders; a number of sinecured actors; independent theatre companies hopeful of an invitation; cultural theorists; Equity; the government; the Arts Council; the national media; conference and symposium organisers; the communities to which it tours, and communities to which it doesn’t; the audiences coming to the theatre, and the ones that don’t. What a drain on the personal and corporate energy which is supposedly dedicated to staging theatrical work for and of the nation. The National Theatre has had seven artistic directors in the last decade. There must be a link between stakeholder pressure and these short terms of office. The relationships between most national theatres and the professional community is at best comfortable and often tense.

In Ireland this tension, in the recent past, has been elevated to hysteria. Not surprising when one of the accidents of the Abbey’s very existence has been to underline the comparative resourcelessness of so many other practitioners, particularly outside Dublin. In Ireland the Abbey seems to be, (as Walter Bagehot said of royal weddings), a brilliant edition of a more general fact. But the Abbey is not to blame for this.

As this study shows, acrimony against the Abbey is still to be found, but it is not so vehement or widespread, and no longer seems to characterise the Irish profession’s mood. There are several reasons for this change, good and bad: perhaps a new balance in opinion, a weariness at the uselessness of opposition, for some an end to caring about it because of the demands of their own work. But

one other reason is far more encouraging: clear signals from within the National Theatre that change is desired and possible:

“I see this National Theatre as one that will be cognisant of its past, true to its best traditions, but bold enough to respond to the creative demands of a burgeoning number of theatre artists and practitioners. Above all it will be a National Theatre that continues to give a voice to the diversity of experience that will shape the identity of the modern Irish state.....There is one essential mode of access.... and that is the openness of the National Theatre to the best theatre talent in the country. For the resources that have been gathered over the years by the Society, its equipment, its stages, and its subsidy are there to be put at the service of the most talented, visionary, and expert of Ireland’s theatre and practitioners.”

(Patrick Mason, The National Theatre Artistic Policy, ppl,7)

Cynics who mistrust Patrick Mason’s rhetoric should get his recent prospectus of artistic policy and read it from cover to cover. What they will read is not an unconditional offer but a carefully-worded challenge to any individual artist or group who believe that they can add value to the work and life of the Abbey. There are signs that this will mean much more than some additional weeks for visiting, baby Abbey, productions of reasonable standard in the Peacock. Other strong signals of change from the National should be responded to: recent key appointments in community education and liaison, and the search for two new associate directors to work alongside the artistic and two staff directors suggest that whatever accessibility under the Mason regime may turn out to mean, for the first time this strand of the Abbey’s work will be *enroled*. It will be a chance to spread the authorship of the Abbey’s annual on and off-stage programme. And why not? The Abbey may, in the past, have declined any interaction with independent groups or artists because it couldn’t be bothered, or didn’t want to “threaten artistic standards”. What, after all, does an open door, platform or showcase for developing artists threaten? What competent critic would attack short but regular seasons in the name of young theatre because of its newness or promise? It is perfectly possible to present excellence on stages and in access and parallel programmes.

If these new appointments generate more dialogue of the richness and candour recorded in the December 1994 Abbey debate; if mutual needs become a matter for regular eye-to-eye or round table discussion rather than argy-bargy in the Irish Times, perhaps the already discernible *diminuendo* in mutual paranoia will continue. A useful interim goal would be to encourage professional gregariousness, or at least combat the aloofness which the Irish are supposed to hate so much. It is time to divert the energy of opposition and self defence into what Ireland’s theatre community badly needs; a united lobby, propelled by public evidence of mutual respect on all sides, designed to do something to correct whatever undermines the profession as a whole.

THE FOURTH ESTATE

THE INDEPENDENT THEATRE

The independent theatre in Ireland is a teeming, bursting world. In Dublin it is led, with great artistic verve and international entrepreneurial flair, by the Gate and, outside the capital by Druid and a number of newer and younger companies. This study shows a total of 49 production companies staging 522 productions between 1990 and 1994 (this includes the Abbey). They performed predominantly Irish work from this century written, to an alarming degree, by men; an enviable amount of it was genuinely new, receiving a first performance; the amount of work staged without the inspiration of a commissioned or extant text is negligible (proving that for Ireland, the past century really has belonged to the writer and that artists and audiences are underexposed to theatre conceived and made in other ways). If the memories of respondents completing questionnaires is to be trusted, just under half of these productions played to an audience of '75% capacity or over.

Other statistics and qualitative research in this study reveal both good and bad trends. First, the volume of activity in proportion to grant aid proves beyond doubt that self-exploitation is one of the defining features of the independent theatre. Hidden personal subsidy is vast. Second, the debate about "the repertoire" is uniquely and excitingly Irish; nowhere in the UK could one talk about this in quite the same cohesive terms. In fact the seemingly natural, often popular affinity with the new text from the contemporary writer in Ireland compares outstandingly well with the UK, where "new writing" is a mantra preached but rarely practised by the larger subsidised theatres, thrown, nearly all of them, to the market and who rely on incentive schemes to cushion the box office risk, and leave the obvious centres for new texts - the Royal Court, the Bush, the Traverse - to bear the burden. Perhaps amongst Ireland's independent companies there is a perverse link between the lack of funding and the impressive proportion of new or 20th century work which is staged; does a lack of financial accountability to funders liberate smaller independent companies in their repertoire choices, or are decisions to opt for the new even braver because of the box office risk?

In the regions the strength of local mission, the relevance of the work, the bond between where and for whom the artist worked and lived, was exceptional. "*My theatre doesn't mean a thing if it doesn't mean anything to my neighbours*" said a writer and director in Waterford. But there is also a town and country schism, a professional unwillingness from important artists, policy-makers and critics to take an interest, let alone engage with, theatre-making outside the capital. In Britain this metropolitan arrogance is a fact of cultural life, but in Ireland it is beyond comprehension and debilitating for those who suffer it. At a meeting of the Cork Arts Development Committee, the degree of alienation and resentment on this matter could only be described as bitter. Lots of issues - national distribution of Arts Council funds, the restrictions applied to available touring funds pre-

venting the Everyman Palace Theatre from co-producing with the local Corcadorca, the disinterest of the national press, perceived apathy concerning Cork's strategic importance to the arts in Ireland - produced a formidable confluence of bad feeling. Individual members of the committee were at pains to stress that these topics did not always dominate their discussions. The degree of mutual co-operation in Cork was impressive; nevertheless the loudest message was the need to correct the enduring symptoms of division.

Division is one thing, but disunity is another. A striking memory, after hours of conversations with professionals in Cork, Waterford, Dublin and Galway, was the lack of a planned, regular assembly for the profession. Conference life seemed active, but too often the stimulus for getting together was to voice complaint or opposition, and not to discuss work, share plans or ideas, announce projects, look for partners, engage in reflection. Of course key points in the theatre calendar - the Dublin Theatre and Galway Arts Festivals especially - almost guarantee some degree of inter-professional contact. But a planned, informal forum - conceived along the most creative lines - does not exist. Some interviewees openly questioned the need for it. But why?

The independents in the capital, though it was not possible to see any of their work during visits to Dublin, have problems of their own. But they also have opportunities: companies like Rough Magic, Pigsback, Passion Machine, are guaranteed some attention from the national press; though funding is just as great a worry, there are routes to mutual help not so available in the regions; they can be seen by visiting producers and directors and perhaps use British or overseas partners to strengthen what they do at home. Perhaps Dublin needs another space: a larger, probably "found" industrial space - light on staffing and overhead costs but heavy on large useable areas-where work can be made, developed and presented. Some examples of artist-run spaces abroad could be examined.

This raises another key question, one shared with theatre-makers in Britain: the ambivalent importance of internationalism. Like its British neighbours, the theatre community is relatively isolated though some respondents in this study stressed the seriousness of this. Of course the Abbey, the Gate, Druid and Macnas receive numerous invitations to perform or collaborate abroad and respond according to their needs or desires. But other kinds of international exchange have to be considered: the opportunity to see some of the greatest or most influential work being produced by leading spirits from overseas, and the question of professional mobility for the individual. Neither is as developed as it could be in Ireland, though the principal festivals do their best to stage important overseas companies and productions, and the presence of a large number of Irish directors, producers and managers at the 1995 Informal European Theatre Meeting in Seville appears to have made some impression. Individual professional mobility - not to flog tours around non-existent European circuits or to raise ECUs - is an elixir, and properly researched itineraries are worth doing for their own sake. Theatre Shop is an admirable initiative which deserves to be supported and to grow.

There is at least one unifying factor in regional theatre in Ireland: fatigue. This is evident across the country - amongst apparently well-funded companies like Druid; amongst the barely funded such as Red Kettle, Island, Punchbag; and of course amongst the pick-up or profit-share groups. The fatigue is found in individuals, but also in the fabric of tiny organisations living off their daily wits and a panhandler's intuition for scraping together resources which leaves the observer humble. Some of the solutions to this are relatively cheap: training, professional secondments, investment in new equipment and technologies. But it had better come quick if more experienced human resources are not to be lost to the artform, giving up in exhaustion and despair or making a move into film or television.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The practical implications of this review, and the steps to be taken, should be determined by the theatre profession in Ireland. But an important first step - hopefully proper for an outsider to recommend - is to engage in some kind of celebration. It would be too easy to forget, in the midst of a huge statistical exercise like this - conceived primarily as a diagnostic tool - the bright threads of greatness which run through the Irish theatre of yesterday and today. It would be too easy to miss the enduring impact and influence which theatre in Ireland has on an admiring, often wondrous, international theatre community across the world. Others continually celebrate its diversity, its artistic standard, its beauty, its sense of place, its resilience. But how often do the relatively small community of people who produce it seize an opportunity to do that?

When the celebration is done, it might also be too easy to mistake the solutions required to put things right. Artists must not be allowed to confuse financial needs with greater structural problems just as solutions offered by funding bodies or planners must not go unexplored or unchallenged. Practitioners and funders should work together, talk together, and above all, travel together, especially to those few locations where stable and functional mechanisms for supporting professional theatre are to be found. Together, perhaps it is possible to understand what makes them work.

If this review were to aim to do one thing, it ought to be, to paraphrase Heaney, the Redress of Independent Theatre-making in Ireland. Whether in metropolitan or rural contexts, that is where the talent will be discovered, taught, encouraged, and eventually released to enrich and reinforce Irish theatre for future generations.

Helena Kaut-Howson

Helena Kaut-Howson has recently completed directing 'The Goldfaden Dream' for the Carneri Theatre in Tel Aviv. Her stage career began in the late 1950's when she was a leading juvenile actress at the Er Kaminska State Theatre in Warsaw. In the late 1960's she moved to England where she worked for a time as an assistant director at the Royal Court Theatre. From 1971 to 1974 she worked in Israel with the Jerusalem Community Theatre and the Habima National Theatre. Since returning to England in 1974, she has directed plays for, amongst others: The Unity Theatre, London; the Leeds Playhouse; the Haymarket Theatre, Leicester; Opera North; the Oxford Playhouse; the Citizens' Theatre Glasgow and the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

She has travelled regularly, returning to Israel to direct with the Habimah Theatre, and Cameri Theatre, directing with Monument National and the National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal; and with the Lyric Theatre in Belfast. In 1990, she directed Jane Eyre at the Gate Theatre in Dublin and in 1992 she directed her own adaptation of Werewolves by Teresa Lubkiewicz for Druid Theatre in Gal-way. From 1991 to 1994, she was Artistic Director of Theatr Clwyd in Wales. She has won the Peter Brook Empty Space Award for an outstanding body of work at the Emylyn Williams Theatre and the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo awards for best production in 1992 for her production of The Devils.

She has a long association with theatre training having worked with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and been a staff director and teacher at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts from 1974 to 1991.

FLOWERS AMONG THE RUINS

IDENTITY AND THE THEATRE - A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Helena Kaut-Howson

in conversation with Declan German
Sunday 8 October 1995

1. The Quest for Identity

Culture and National Health

The point of identification that I find with the Irish Theatre, given my own background, is that like the Poles or any nation whose survival was at different times in history dependent on the survival of its cultural identity, the Irish recognise the role of culture or the role of spiritual life as an expression and condition of the national health. This is true of Ireland more than other nations, because at the time when it had no independence it knew that it was only its cultural identity and perhaps its religious identity - the two were very often united in a set of spiritual values - that secured the survival of the nation and therefore secured something like national health.

This was true in times of political oppression, but I would venture is even more true in times of independence when new threats are posed to the national psyche - corrosion of unity and purpose for instance which in more difficult political times don't seem to be so threatened - and the nation seems to be more divided. I do not need to elaborate on this - the commercialisation, the break-down and the way society is alienated from itself, from its means of production as well as the fruits of its labour. I believe that to be the case of Ireland and there are many similarities with Poland which are superficial but nonetheless stem from similarities in the history.

The awareness that 'to have its art is to know itself, is a condition of national health. We are healthy if we can describe the condition. We are not yet doomed if we can describe the condition and that is why we need art as a language. In that way, Paul Mercier's play, *Buddleia*, which we saw yesterday, left me optimistic even through it was such a tragic and pessimistic indictment of society. But the fact that it can be described is exhilarating. This is why I felt the company, *Passion Machine*, must go out and tour because ordinary people will understand and it will have a manifold effect, because people will respond both to the message - to the effect - and to the medium itself, the immediacy of it.

I hope to put forward a strong argument for subsidy for the arts. That will be the main purpose of what I have to say here. I hope that, to the Irish who instinctively understand the true significance of the arts, it will not sound as 'romantic'

as it might to my more cynical English colleagues, when I say that art is *the flowering of the national culture*. I think that an argument should be made for increased subsidy, in the same way that it is seen as a necessity to subsidise health education or public broadcasting. Nobody questions the fact that those aspects of national life require subsidy. To the same extent it is necessary to subsidise culture - culture as a facility available to society - and I mean widely understood society not just to the elite.

I am hesitant in expressing these views but what in my own background persuaded me that it is not just ephemeral and not just esoteric, is that when you look at history, for better or for worse, governments, pragmatically, believed that spectacle was the most immediate, the most potent, the most powerful way of reaching people. After the Russian Revolution great big events were happening outside the winter palace and when people had nothing to eat and nothing to heat their houses with and they sat in sheepskins inside the unheated Moscow Art Theatre or the Bolshoi Theatre with steam coming out of them, watching the great treasures of post-Tsarist culture. People believed that although everything may be destroyed, you keep culture alive and the theatre open. There was theatre in Auschwitz. Leon Schiller, the greatest visionary of the Polish theatre, formed the basis of the new regenerated, revived theatre in Auschwitz. There is theatre in war-torn Sarajevo. It is such an immediate tool of reaching people on a deep spiritual level... invaluable.

It is also, a humanising experience. We know the value of theatre in prisons and so on. It is proven. So these are my arguments.

Access

There are many paradoxes here - the paradox of the arts being a truly sophisticated form of human activity and yet the need for it to be widely accessible and widely participated in. From the time of the French Revolution, politicians and sociologists and civic activists have been pondering on that paradox - how to make the great legacies of culture available to the masses without destroying their sophistication and their value - and no optimum formula has been arrived at. The main thing is that the discussion continues. That is really perhaps more important.

There is no formula. After the Russian Revolution, a movement called the Proletcult was created and people were trying to evolve a new culture and threw out of the window the old. Before them, Marat and Robespierre tried to create a culture for the people, renaming the calendar and everything, and still they made mistakes. Reality was always contradicting the attempts to prescribe the formula. When socialist realism was evolved, it proved to be a monster that ravaged the arts rather than helping them to flourish.

I myself am, on a theoretical level, lost in that argument - the paradox of what is professional art and what is democratically accessible art and so on. Practically I do know that it is a lie to deny people the best and the most sophisticated

of the arts, a fallacy to say that a working class man would not be capable of appreciating opera - or Shakespeare.

History and the Individual

Art, for me very clearly illuminates the point at which history crosses individual destiny. I will tell you about an incident *from* my own past which illustrates my journey to the theatre. I grew up in a post-war reality where there were just ruins around and one of the very first things that opened in the city where I grew up was the opera house - only because that building was not destroyed. The local authorities immediately decided that the opera must be animated even though there were no means, no orchestras, no soloists and so on, but there was an orchestra building.

And so the first thing I saw at the age of four in my life was Aida and apparently I fainted when the curtain went up, mainly because you know we were surrounded by ruins and you suddenly see so much colour and music and such an attack on the senses, it was just unbelievable. And I remember vividly having a conversation with my mother. I was very worried ... Aida is a story of an Egyptian princess who gets immured in a tomb because of forbidden love. They put a wall around the princess and she dies. I was terribly worried about it when I came home and my mother said don't worry, tomorrow she will be on that stage again. And I thought that that was the most astonishing aspect of that whole experience, not only the colour and the incredible transportation of the senses. I thought what a wonderful thing that every evening you are reborn, there is no death. So in a country ravaged by death, even to a child, it seemed a miracle that only theatre can perform.

And that is the common denominator. That is what the audience really wants. It wants that mystery tapped, and immortality - you know, that moment - whether it is through confirmation of the suspicion of what life is about or through some other illumination.

In my nation's history there is not a family whose life has not been in some way affected by history the same way as there isn't a family in Northern Ireland whose life has not been affected. The main thing that struck me in England - as I married an Englishman - was that there were still so many families who had the family china in their cabinets, which is something completely unheard of in Poland where the family china was always one of the first things to be crushed by the tanks - the beautiful things. I think that the Irish understand that there isn't a family whose destiny has not been touched by the wheels of history and I feel that that is the strength of the culture, that awareness.

Changing national identities

In Ireland as in Poland there is pre-independence and post-independence literature and theatre. And the pre-independence theatre or literature or art was

preoccupied with history and the nation whereas the post-independence art is preoccupied with society and the individual. It is just a development but it is moving along certain patterns which are both traditional and universal and specific to this particular culture. A need to be understood - not rejected.

Art confirms and redefines the nation's self-image, even though that image is ever-changing and ever-reaching for the root of its permanence. It is always changing but there is something which people perceive as permanent, the kind of blueprint of their identity. Peter Brook said that theatre - because it is such a potent and such an immediate art and in many ways the most interesting because it is the collective assembling of so many other arts - is a very curious merging of craft and mystery. I think that there is perhaps a link between what it is that we search for universally, and that which is an expression of a national spirit, and I feel that theatre more than any other art expresses what it is that a nation is searching for in this quest.

Art, whether you practice it or partake in it, is a spiritual necessity and not a commodity or an exterior sign of social success. People are becoming increasingly aware of the need for art and it becomes very often a subject much discussed, presented and used as a point for manipulation. Culture becomes a kind of commodity. I hear of things like those 'state of the art' buildings and so on presented as an external expression of a nation's success. This should not be confused with the real spiritual necessity that is perhaps not so much to do with buildings. I am talking here about the money that is spent on glamorous buildings and art centres and so on which are then somehow not truly in touch with the living nerve, and the fact that governments insist on being in control of those things rather than allowing artists to inhabit them and mould them to the actual needs. I feel that certain things are like monuments to the culture rather than true expression of it. Sometimes artists prefer an archaic and shambling dilapidated centre to something that is glamorous, spic-and-span, newly-designed and expensive to maintain. That is not to say that buildings should not be created, but there is a disparity. There should be a moment when they are passed on to the people who can actually use them rather than kept as a places to show off to tourists ... and visiting "experts".

Language and Symbol

The Irish dramatic experience is massive and wonderful and eloquent. Language is such an important tool in the Irish dramatic experience that it is the one theatre which least of all European and world theatres needs to resort to Shakespeare as basic repertory. Most theatres in Europe or in the world, when stuck, go for Shakespeare. Here you don't need to do it, you have such a rich dramatic vocabulary. But apart from that, and this must be really recognised, acknowledged and continually repeated, the word is only one of the many languages of theatre - there is the language of the image, the language of the sound, the language of the lights, you know the crumbling body of that boy yesterday, in *Buddleia*, is as eloquent as anything that was said there And not only

the images from today, but the astonishing, illuminating-for-a-moment images of the past which we recognise even though they are not of our immediate generation of our times but maybe of some deeper past, and we recognise an image suddenly that comes like something through space - an image of a very distant past.

Today's world offers also yet another revolutionary intrusion into the established language of the theatre which is the language of different cultures. That is why seeing the Footsbarn production (The Odyssey, Dublin Theatre Festival) to me was a revelation, because I didn't expect them to be successfully multicultural, and yet finding that those cultures at the source meet. We can accept the foreign words within the body of our theatre's language, without feeling that the expression of our national psyche and national spirit is threatened. And they together make that universal phrase in which the audience is allowed to share.

I have been thinking also about the use of ancient languages such as Irish and Welsh in exploring the changing surface of our cultural landscape, as in Robert Lepage's "Plaques Tectoniques", the continually changing, shifting outer layer of our continents. You know, something hidden underneath may be discovered when they shift and move. Like those maps in John Crowley's play (Double Helix) - superimposed on the body, that can be shifting but there is something underneath which is a human torso or a face or an arm.

There are good reasons to cling on to the Celtic languages and there are interesting theatre companies using the Welsh language in this way, like Brith Gof which is run by Mike Pearson, who is a genius and an Englishman. He would not call himself so much a theatre person as a kind of cultural archaeologist. This tendency in culture now is interesting. Because borders are breaking and changing and nationalities and all that is melting and merging and re-emerging and refashioning itself, we are looking for something deeper, layers that bear imprints of something ancient. And it is interesting that you would use the language like there were imprints there. In that way it sounds like an echo in your tribal memory.

Re-forming the Theatre

I believe that theatre is in need of continual re-forming of itself. Re-forming is finding other forms, which doesn't mean throwing out of the window everything that was there before, but finding other forms. And that again goes back to what I was saying about this curious combination of mystery and craft that makes that particular art, so every time we look for meaning we have to find a form, a new form for it. That form, immediately when it becomes formulated becomes out-dated. Those forms that you lament passing and not being recorded would probably no longer apply but it would have been good to record them so that they could serve as a kind of legacy. - so that an ignorant person does not try to break open doors, you know.

There is a constant struggle between form and the quest for meaning, deep meaning, the sort of 'meaning behind meaning'. I don't want to sound mystical

but, you know, it is like Eliot's spinning wheel which is forever changing - the centre seems still, but that is the real motion, that is the real 'meaning of meanings'. And that is the secret that we are forever searching - whether it is a 'state of the nation' play or an 'individual versus society' play, or 'an individual in the microcosm of the family', or whatever it might be in terms of the surface experience that the play relates. In that quest we are forever obstructed by form.

I am a great believer in re-forming theatre but while re-forming it, we must not allow people who may not understand it to intervene in a way that the reforming becomes tantamount to throwing away the baby with the bathwater. That is yet another argument, passionately felt, for allowing the artists to decide what reform is necessary. This Theatre Review is trying to look at how to reform, to find new forms, operational and functional, but if it is done without the artists' direct participation then it might just throw the baby out with the bathwater, or it might not resolve the problems which are manifold. I also think that theatre must change itself and whether we are talking about the infrastructure or talking about a national theatre, I believe that the quest for new form has to be constant and ongoing, and whatever changes will be instituted by future policy, they should allow for that constant change.

2. Infrastructure

Impressions of Ireland

It is my admiration for the Irish theatre that brought me here in the first place. That remains unchanged and in practice, if anything, it really grows continually. The vitality of the Irish theatre is expressed through its dramatic literature, because that is what travels most effectively - Irish writers are all the rage in London now and have been for the last few years. In Poland, for instance, my colleagues who produce those magazines that translate the best new foreign plays, forever keep asking me to send them scripts of Irish plays.

I will talk about specific impression now, though of course I haven't seen as much as I would have liked to. I was dazzled to a greater extent than I expected to be by the ability of the artists whose work I have seen during the past few months to somehow transcend the severe financial constraints, and the fact that there were certain distinctive features of new work which signalled artistic maturity despite the constraints. I admired unexpected things, work of companies I had never come across before and work where the style was so original and somehow embraced stylistically what is the genius of Irish writing, the genius for poetry and storytelling.

Both the exceptional pieces I saw, and I haven't seen enough, so it really would not be right to say that this was representative - but the work of Passion Machine, and Red Kettle, with the Donal O'Kelly play, (Catalpa, The Movie) wonderfully expressive - displayed those features that make for the strength and individuality of the Irish stylistic expression in theatre. The telling of the story and the poet-

ic resonance that is always in the language, and that incredible reckless physicality - even in that under-rehearsed Passion Machine piece (you could see that actors could only be in it because their scene was short!) but you felt that there was a certain ignoring of conventional rules of structuring a play which signalled great sophistication really - this sort of inconsequential way of ending a story or the way he moved structurally from one scene to another in such a panoramic way and the polyphonic character of the way the actors almost always spoke together - that feeling - and the incredible beautiful moving between scenes - that there was never a sense of it developing in a vertical way - beautifully epic - I thought that that was indicative of great sophistication and maturity whilst being always in touch with what it was trying to communicate to people and was being utterly accessible - brilliant. So I think there is much to celebrate and admire in Irish theatre.

There is this enormous explosion of theatre activity, and vastly increased awareness of the importance of theatre in society, not just the traditional theatre going parts of society. The Project was in operation when I came here first to work, obviously, and I was aware of Rough Magic here and in London, and Druid of course. Now there are all those many many independent companies some of which I have seen and most of which I admired, but I would worry about the mode in which they operate and the future they have, the room for development and the criteria by which they are both assessed and subsidised and allowed to grow or, very clearly and consciously, allowed to reach their life span and die, which is probably more the situation, wittingly or unwittingly.

The other thing is that there is a very visible and powerful pressure for change of attitudes and habits and there is some diversity of views on the possible changes. There is a sense of great energy on one side and a sense of being in a cul-de-sac on the other, which mostly they blame on the fact they have got no money to develop further and there is no way further they can go.

The Independent Sector

It seems to me that the predominant type of independent company lays claim to no particular aesthetic nor any 'specialist' sort of style nor any specialist appeal. It claims only to be young and sexy and versatile, intelligent and robust, which it usually is, and poor which it doesn't want to be. It is usually animated by one or two people. Such a company does not really have the means to grow - the way that Druid was allowed to grow into a company of artists working together in a particular way. They are dependent on the energy and changing views of one or two personalities and that is not good in itself, because it means that a company will burn itself out.

Most of the companies I have seen are not style specific companies like Macnas, or like Barabbas, rather they are groups of artists who got together in order to make theatre because that was the only way that they could make theatre. By virtue of their talent and their individuality they had some dynamic. The

majority of these struggle to maintain the initial creative impetus in conditions of severe underfunding.

Those few companies whose consistent track record has earned them, over the years, a more stable subsidy, have by now arrived at a so-called 'plateau' level of funding, which in the case of Rough Magic for example, allows no more than two and a half productions per year (2 new plays and 1 revived for tour).

Understandably, they would like to grow, to mature into a fully-fledged main-stream company, but because they have neither the funding nor the base, they set their hearts on inheriting the Gate or securing a 'corner' with the Abbey.

I just don't believe that the Irish case proves that proliferation of small independent companies is the answer to the needs of society for theatre. I don't believe it is the answer. I feel it is an intermediary thing. It is as if the government needs to fulfil some sort of touring obligation towards the regions so it says the only way you can do things is that you can tour. Because people have no other outlet in which to practice their art, they form a company and they tour a little bit. And because there is nowhere else for young directors to learn the craft, they form a company of actors. It is like they are stopping up gaps - that's the philosophy.

But most Dublin companies would not contemplate going - moving - to the regions where the need for such 'mainstream' theatre is greater, because they consider themselves, rightly or wrongly, Dublin theatre, and believe there is not the audience out there.

Producing Houses

I am a supporter of a theatre as a producing house. I believe that in the same way as there is a need for a school or a university in a city or a large town, there is a need for a producing theatre. But then, I come from a background where one believed that a supply could be created in anticipation rather than in response to the demand. When I talk of theatre I mean a theatre that is more than a group of people and the plays they put on. I mean a base in which the company is in control, I mean resources and a structure to create a season of work, to generate other work, to offer career opportunities, to become a forum for social exchange and a cultural focus for the entire community.

I think that there is a strong case for developing a network of producing theatres or certainly some alternatives - a balance in the regions to what exists in Dublin. I would agree with the Arts Council's basic premise that there must be, otherwise the artistic community - the workforce - is continually at its own throat fighting for the few limited places there are, which is just the Abbey and the Gate. Forever fighting and not allowing anybody room to breathe. Should there not exist a serious alternative in Cork and Waterford and in Galway?

We went to Cork and we talked to practitioners there, including managers of

venues. They declared that what they needed was more freedom and support in forming the partnerships of their choice and in selecting the product of their choice. But nobody answered positively the question of whether Cork needs a home-based mainstream theatre - nobody answered that question or if there was an indication of an answer it was a negative answer. Either, no thank you, or we tried and it didn't work or amateurs did it better or if we activate anything it will be to reactivate the Irish Ballet Company. But we didn't ask the audience. I wonder if a survey was conducted amongst the public?

In Galway, Druid, while Garry Hynes was there running it full-time, was a small, very exciting, highly individual and justly acclaimed building-based company. Everything it did in those years was informed by the personality of the artistic director and by the spirit that she generated among her colleagues - many of those left Druid when she went to the Abbey. I understand she will now be running it on a part-time basis, spending two days every fortnight in Galway. What she will be running at such a remove will be of necessity a different thing.

So even in Galway the structure is not developed enough to allow room for other directors to continue strongly affecting its development or for other people to train there because it has only got enough money and enough room to do four productions a year. (Incidentally, I find this idea that a company should be confined by virtue of its funding to putting on just four plays - or in some cases just two - per season a wasteful idea. There should be a minimum of eight plays they could present or keep in their repertoire. If the answer is that there isn't enough public for more than four productions a year, I don't believe it.)

Irish theatre needs more support, more money, more room. You cannot say that just those two Dublin theatres - those two big organisations - have to provide that room, there must be more such organisations.

I think that an independent company without a home, if the energy is there and the continuing support of the subsidy is there and the audience is there, can develop a style of work, it can develop writing and so on, but it cannot develop in many other areas, for instance its style of presentation cannot properly develop. I think of the kind of quality of work of say the Royal Exchange company, which has a permanent base in the Royal Exchange Theatre which is a theatre in the round. They have very high design standards but there are no sets as such. The influence they had on the thinking and training of designers is the importance of a very eloquent prop...or the cuts of costumes...or the lighting...or the sound which is unique to the Royal Exchange because it has particular available facilities there because of its structure - very creative sound designers have emerged from working with that theatre, making effects - this may seem insignificant - but it has a phenomenal impact artistically. So I am saying that certain companies cannot evolve any of that - they haven't got the facilities - it is all shoestring. I am not saying money is all that is necessary - a home base is necessary then you can generate your money. Box office may cover a great deal, if the turnover is continuous.

There is room for a few itinerant companies if as I have said they have a particular aesthetic, which means that they cannot keep on producing shows. Rather, they have got to perfect one show and therefore they have got to tour. The perfect example is Theatre de Complicite who don't need a base, because they perfect their work on tour, with their particular aesthetic.

Co-Productions and Collaborations

I feel that the tendency in England now is to somehow take the living body out of the theatre, which is the home, and leave the shell and stuff it with any passing kind of stuffing. The theatre is in the hands of taxidermists. I am talking now about the - so strongly recommended - trend towards collaborations and co-productions, which is the path towards a loss of identity in the theatre. Theatres are being turned into garages, where productions are parked, and I think it is a very dangerous policy. I hope it will be stopped. I know it will be stopped because it is so unnatural. I am saying this from my own experience as a practitioner and my own belief of what theatre is about. It is about identity.

There are strong arguments against this separation of venues and companies, and turning venues consciously into places where managers exercise their skills - and line their pockets by the way or especially line the pockets of middle-men in some way. I believe a danger of collaboration is that the more you do and the more self-sufficient it makes you appear, the more it frees the government, or the Arts Council, from taking responsibility for - and from giving more money to - development. And it allows entrepreneurs and so on to step in.

Apart from which, in my experience, collaborations into which I had to enter - not because somebody dictated this but because well, it was an interesting thing and also sometimes I thought I must try it because it looks like economically it could make sense - in every case, it cost us more than the benefits it brought us. But the real danger is actually loss of artistic identity.

A theatre's identity is created by group of artists - by allowing room for a group of artists who learn to develop a language. I think Garry Hynes developed a language at Druid, and I recognised that language in the wonderful production of *At The Black Pig's Dyke*. It was the same language and yet had nothing to do with her because it was produced after she left, under Maeliosa Stafford's direction. That is to advance the language of the theatre! Not only through the literature but through the acting styles and through the conceptual side of it and the mode of, methods of staging and so on. And this something that doesn't only happen amongst the artists but affects and informs the expectations of the audience. That's why I felt it was crucial that the theatre I was running also became a forum for debate and so we had a series of workshops and a series of 'extra-mural' activities, platform events we called them, which were enormously popular. So what I am saying is that this English trend to replace artistic policy driven resident companies with commercially oriented collaborative ventures is retrogressive and destructive to the identity of the theatre.

I am told I mustn't forget 'the economic realities'. What are those realities? I am trying to come to grips with them. From the time of the Gulf War, suddenly, it has seemed that coming from governments everywhere including France and Germany which are the richest and most admired subsidy giving systems, there has been an observed decline in subsidy to the arts or to anything that was considered the softer option. So that is a trend. Are we to accept it or are we to fight against it? And if we are to accept it how far do we allow it to go?

If this is the trend and therefore the theatre has got to reform itself, it should reform itself not only because of the so-called 'financial realities'! It should reform itself because of the need to continually reform itself because it is a living art.

National Theatre

National Theatre is a different thing for each nation. Here we have got to consider the historical circumstances which created this particular institution and the changing circumstances which promote its well being or cause its decline. I am not qualified to analyse why the Abbey is in so much conflict with the artistic community. The most worrying thing is that it seems to be alienated from its public.

In Wales we had a problem with the actual term 'national' and I noticed in the debate on the Abbey that it too seemed to be a dominant theme - there was resistance to the word 'national' - its right to call itself 'national' was questioned - whether it does truly represent the theatre that is happening for the nation, or that the nation wants or needs, or are there not other more genuine manifestations of national theatre throughout the country even in those very impoverished circumstances.

In Wales it was felt that the conditions were not yet right for the establishment of a National Theatre, but the national and cultural aspirations of the Welsh do call for the existence of a theatre that should function as a national resource. When I tried to formulate a policy for Theatr Clwyd which would encompass the role of a national resource I felt it was necessary to activate several avenues through which this could be realised, such as devising a strong relationship with all the main educational organisations in Wales - not as political expedience but simply out of necessity because there was a need to create a body of research and to lay foundations for new dramatic literature. I felt we needed to tour extensively even though there was no money - every argument was against it. But we toured. We toured two shows at a time on a reversible set - offering the actors the challenge of two shows (they liked the variety) and the designer and crew the challenge to present the touring venues with exactly the kind of production values that we were able to offer our audiences at the home base. And the impact was immediate.

Perhaps the so-called financial realities will not allow the Abbey to revise its role radically, but there is no doubt that it should address itself seriously to the question of touring more extensively, to the question of its educational programme

and to the question of hosting, once a year, a worthwhile outside production from the regions or the independent sector - without damaging its attempt to create an identity. I believe it would be both helpful to its image and very useful to enlarging its sense of being plugged into the moment in time. Also, it should broaden the international link, by sending out worthwhile examples of its work, and certainly by bringing companies or importing on an individual basis guest directors, the best practitioners from Europe. Even in England, actors respond tremendously to the challenge of working with people like Peter Stein, Ninagawa or Robert Sturrua.

But there might be yet another deeply hidden obstacle to change. Artistic Directors come and go declaring their desire to reflect the times we live in. But for true change to happen, the people who actually have the power should have to change, be replaced perhaps, because the political realities are that the people who have the power are the people who own it. The question is, who owns the National Theatre? I wonder if it is really true that it is owned by the nation, or is it owned by a group of people who are elected for life to be its custodians? And if their values are the values of the time in which they were elected, then there is an unmoveable wall. This may seem a simplistic observation but perhaps it isn't.

Then there is also the fact that the theatre as an organisation is manned by an existing staff and let's say one of its internal departments created in the 60s reflects the values of the 60s and the working of the 60s - let's say the administration reflects the time when those people were put into office. Likewise, the values and mode of operation of the technical department, etc. Everybody who is there, their main aim is survival in their jobs. I am speaking as plainly as that. The only person who is brought in on a fixed term contract is an Artistic Director.

That person has a completely different objective than the others, the others are there to survive - he is there to create an impact and effect change. There will be a natural opposition to change even though people will be momentarily inspired. It will only be a question of how long is the honeymoon. Perhaps you allow the artistic director a longer term contract The director of the Gate does not have a fixed-term contract and I believe that this situation is more advantageous for the theatre.

One might also mention that the Abbey is a dilapidated building; the stage itself is not very comfortable and the auditorium too small to make large scale productions economically viable. They have all kinds of problems that Patrick Mason will also be trying to remedy. But I think that the structure - what it is about and what should it serve...the constitution of it - should be changed. Perhaps there should be a team of artists at the helm. The Glasgow Citizens has three creative people running it and the Royal Exchange has traditionally a team of directors in charge. Those teams remain in predominance in the battle against the bureaucrats and the Philistines. Also you have several minds working together, dialectically opposed and complementing each other.

3. The Theatre Profession

Learning the Craft

We often expect theatre, because it is the communal artform, to answer the great big questions like how are we to live - questions of life and death and existential matters. And yet it is involved with craft, which is as practical as pottery - very very practical - and what gives theatre its true value is its treble dimension, this great spiritual quest, the communal effect of it, and the involvement of craft.

Perhaps that leads me on to things like training and looking on theatre as more than just an amateur activity - the idea that anybody can act or anybody can talk and walk and so on. I mean singing and dancing and acrobatics are obviously techniques - techniques are not so obvious when it comes to theatre. Theatre should be understood as a highly rigorous discipline and a craft that needs perfecting. And that needs subsidy, that needs care and nurturing. There must be an organised and methodical approach towards theatre training.

From my observations, there isn't a sufficiently developed system of training for the theatre in Ireland, and whether that stems from the fact that practitioners don't attach so much importance to it or that there is no money for it or that there is not a tradition, I don't know.

Of course there are many ways in which you can learn a craft. *You* can learn it through methodically organised training, you can learn it also through apprenticeship but I would venture to say that you can learn everything through apprenticeship it just may be a more chaotic and random way. If there exists a very strong denned aesthetic of a theatrical movement - say a company with a distinct powerfully defined and individual aesthetic - and people want to work that way and learn that way, then obviously the right way for those people would be to join as an apprentice to that kind of company. I imagine this might apply to the people working with Footsbarn or Gardzienice because those companies tend to represent a way of life as well as a way of work. But I have not encountered a company with that distinctive aesthetic in Ireland (with the exception, perhaps of Macnas).

What I have encountered is a prevailing view that talent is a home grown thing and that you are born with it, and that in theatre especially you do not actually need to train. And also I have heard there is no real training for directors here, there is no training for designers as such apart from really very sketchy and insufficient options. I think that that is a very big gap which ought to be very seriously looked at. And there are still lingering attitudes to people who trained in England, almost a prejudice, yet people who have made it big abroad become an immediate success here.

Of course, there are those exceptional talents that came up without any training, like there are home-grown musicians, singers or glass-makers. Nobody questions that it is possible for a very talented musician to have the ability to pick up

notes without learning to read them, but to learn to read and to acquire musical sophistication is something that polishes the diamond rather than an unnecessary frivolity.

And, on directors, there are many brilliant directors that are born out of the real school of theatre, in other words born out of the need, the necessity. The cry that is welling up in them, the need to speak and there are people - geniuses like Paul Mercier who both writes and directs - but this is sort of unique. And this is not to say that to give them training would diminish the ability of that kind of talent to burst through.

In England, because of the decline in funding to the arts and the near elimination of discretionary grants, there are less and less students going to drama schools, only those who can afford it, which is a terrible tragedy. In this country you are going to abolish fees in universities and I think there is a future there which must be pressed for, for unifying and making a symbiotic relationship between the vocational training and the academy to create a proper training and this is not to be critical about the existing vocational training in this country. It's just a path from there. I would say that for directors it would need to be a four-year degree-linked training and for actors definitely three to three and a half. Training of technicians, producers and stage managers is another area neglected here, and I believe that in today's climate, there is even a stronger argument for supplying the theatre with a generation of properly trained practitioners.

With regard to actor training, I would say that two years, which has been the norm here, is not sufficient even for the strict vocational training. I think it is ludicrous to say that we have touched on Stanislavski and touched on Brecht and so on - the disciplines are so extensive.

The acting community in England has found a way to maintain its craft by setting up Actors Centres. There is a thriving Actors Centre in London and in Manchester. The funds for the Actors Centres come from the members themselves.

So I am suggesting that a systematic and thorough training for the people who will inherit the Irish theatre could be provided for, so that the theatre is not narrow and you don't end up with a number of exhausted creative people cursed with what the Arts Council refers to as a "limited life span".

Mis-en-Scene

One cannot talk in Ireland about big theatrical movements, about significant developments in mis-en-scene. I know I shouldn't be discussing the National Theatre of Ireland in isolation, but when Yeats created it - and it was created for different purposes and in different circumstances - even Yeats took note of the current developments in theatre, of the theories of Gordon Craig, Appia and the Great Theatre Reform. I believe that it is the privilege and the duty of a National Theatre not only to uphold the literary legacy but also to nurture new trends in staging.

I would ascribe the lack of discernible trends in that area and the limited range of the two mainstream theatres to the fact that there are not enough theatre bases in Ireland as such so there is nothing to emulate or rebel against.

The Gate's main contribution has been that under Michael Colgan's leadership it introduced European production standards. Michael was obviously aware of the developments and changes that were taking place in European and especially in English theatre at that time. He noted that design had a great deal to do with it and understood a very important symbiotic link within the creative team - the director/designer link. One of his early productions at the Gate made that statement - I think it was Patrick Mason and Joe Vanek's "The Recruiting Officer" - when the whole auditorium was reconstructed to accommodate the design.

But production values are more than exquisite pictures on stage. They represent a concept as well as projection of an in-depth thought, a philosophy that should be as rooted in the national culture as should direction, acting and policy making. It is time that art colleges should offer proper, structured full-time courses in theatre design, courses which would include the Irish visual tradition and the developments in European scenography, and help to create a modern and yet uniquely Irish approach to theatre design.

The more interesting manifestations of current stage design in Ireland might usefully represent Irish theatre in international exhibitions and events such as the Prague Bienalle or the Scenofest etc. It would open the gate to influences, help to forge new professional links and raise the image of Irish theatre abroad. I certainly think the work of artists like Monica Frawley especially her work for Druid, is distinctly Irish, very modern and beautifully expressive of the philosophy of that particular theatre.

The current explosion of artistic energy in Irish theatre ought to be recorded and accompanied by equivalent upsurge of critical appraisal. That is why I feel there is a special need for the resuscitation of your splendid *Theatre Ireland*. That final issue which I have been re-reading was the most tragic thing I have seen, that final article by Linda Henderson who said with such dignity, she couldn't understand the arbitrary nature of the decision but was not going to waste her time quarrelling with it, knowing that the most frivolous decisions will be the ones most vigorously defended. This wonderful line with which she ends saying "we will not be back but we will be watching!" I hope you will be back, Linda Henderson!!!

Theatre Ireland filled the need for a forum, where debate could be recorded, where thoughts could be channelled, through which information could be disseminated and trends recorded and scripts published etc. That was useful and crucial not only for the artistic community here, but also as a representation of the Irish theatre to the world outside.

Ten Thoughts to Conclude

Here are some thoughts in conclusion. Would it seem presumptions if I called them my recommendations?

1. There is a need for increasing the awareness of the significance of the arts as a national asset. The English believe, sometimes unjustifiably, that they are the centre of international theatre; theatre is their great tourist attraction. I think you can justifiably promote the same for Ireland. If, for the next few years, theatre is promoted as the great tourist attraction, there will certainly be more money coming in for its development. And of course, theatre should continue to be funded as an accessible shared facility for a wider range of society.
2. The second point is to introduce a well thought out system of training for the arts of theatre and by this I mean not only actors but designers, directors, producers and stage managers..
3. Although there are no simple answers to how it should be done, there is a need for a wider regional network of producing theatres. The Arts Council should respond wherever there is a clear detectable need for that in the regions and to give companies sufficient money, not just add £3,000 to their budget, but to allow them a chance to develop a season and to have a relationship with their base that is as close to owning a base as possible. If you are just even a preferential tenant, there is no room for development. You cannot build up your resources, you cannot engage in a proper relationship with the community and by this I mean that theatre is more than just a place where a show happens.

I think of the independent companies sometimes as hedge schools. You can teach people in a hedge of course, but you have an independent country here with a culture of its own and it needs to be based on more solid foundations than hedge schools.

4. If it is said that there are to be limits to the money coming from the government to the Arts Council, then how about moving the National Theatre to the responsibility of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, devolving Theatre-in-Education to the responsibility of Ministry of Education and moving the Community Theatre to the Ministry of Environment. (Local Authorities are crucial to culture in all countries - for instance in Israel where I am currently working. Their lack of participation in the cultural scene here is unbelievable to me). Obviously this transfer should be done while leaving the money to the Arts Council intact.

I am aware of the argument that if the National Theatre went to the ministry, people would worry that another Minister, perhaps one not as popular and enlightened as the current Minister of the Arts is, might interfere, and then suddenly there would be a feeling within the National Theatre that it was no longer free. But I think that there could be a constitutional way of safeguarding that freedom.

5. An independent body should be formed to lobby for the arts - a body which itself has nothing to do with grants and funding - an organisation purely set up to lobby for the arts and to discuss and to monitor and to be a forum. One wouldn't worry then that it is only the people who give the money who have the right to scrutinise, monitor and supervise.

6. On Theatre-in-Education. Not to diminish the importance of it, but I think it is an education tool and used for that purpose and I believe in devolving it to the responsibility of Ministry of Education. I would agree with Martin Drury that it should not be seen just as a means to prepare audiences for the future but it should serve its particular client, the child. Its purpose is both creative and educational as is theatre's, but in a different way and with different emphasis. I thought The Ark was a wonderful place and one looks forward to the international companies performing there and to the festivals that will be taking place there. It is obviously a wonderful thing that it is happening.

There is a tradition in England that children go to the theatre only once a year to see the Christmas Pantomime. I believe this is neglect and a waste. And it is not enough to take theatre to schools, the theatre itself is the place - the encounter and the experience and the curtain going up and being amongst an adult audience actually and not just with the school party - this is the experience - so that there is a whole culture. Perhaps special incentives should be given for schools to be able to afford cheaper tickets and subscriptions.

7. Role of an Arts Council? Obviously to respond to the needs as well as promote and develop the arts. Listen to the artists and engage in a close dialogue. Which takes us to touring again.

8. I do believe that as far as the whole touring policy is concerned, it needs to be reformed and rethought. The existing one seems to be designed simply to supply the existing venues with a touring product. There is no question but that the demand of the venues be able to control what they bring in, rather than to have things thrust upon them because of the current restrictions, needs to be addressed. If they feel that they want to make their own partnerships and be co-producers rather than to just accept what the Arts Council feels is the appropriate touring product for them, then that should be respected.

There is no contradiction between this and the need for producing theatres. A home-based company could have touring slots within its schedule and its artistic policy should accommodate the importing of companies that would complement its work.

9. Talking of England and Europe. Certain Irish companies see themselves as welcome in England which they consider a sort of 'abroad' and they feel there are different criteria in operation there than what they see as the very provincial and very hierarchical criteria in operation in Dublin where they think that they are judged by the subsidies or by the venues in which they appear and so on.

They feel welcome in England and appreciated there. I think Europe might be a bigger and more interesting playground. I feel that perhaps the Arts Council should see as its role to support the export of Irish theatre further afield. I have witnessed how this can impact. I took a Welsh company to an international festival in Poland and it was the first visit of a Welsh company and the number of preconceptions that it broke - so exciting! It was like bringing a company from New Guinea or something - they thought that the Welsh only sing on the hill-side! The participation of an exciting Irish company would be of tremendous interest and of mutual benefit.

10. Re-establish *Theatre Ireland* as a magazine!

I am very conscious that my suggestions are based on limited observations, and perhaps the direction our conversation has taken did not allow me enough room to convey how truly impressed and often astonished I was with the work I saw here. I cannot think of another country of comparable size where in three brief visits one could encounter so much talent, vitality and resourcefulness!

Flowers Among the Ruins is the edited transcript of an interview with Helena Kaut-Howson which took place over four hours of the Arts Council building in Dublin, on Sunday 8th October 1995. The themes and questions were based on notes by the interviewee. The process of editing the taped conversation down to essay format was undertaken by me, in constant communication by fax and phone with Helena in Tel Aviv and London. The author has read and approved this version for publication.

Declan German, November 1995

Eduard Delgado

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He was previously a senior cultural advisor to the Council of Europe, 1992 - 1994; and prior to this he was director of CERC (Centre d'Estudis I Rewrsos Culturals), Barcelona. He currently holds the Chair of CIRCLE, Cultural Information and Research Centres Liaison in Europe. In the 1970's he lived for a number of years in Britain, where he was active in community theatre.

THE MUSIC THE STRANGER HEARS A CONTRIBUTION FROM THE EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

Eduard Delgado

Director of INTERARTS

Observatory for Urban and Regional Cultural policies, Barcelona.

*He heard the lilt in the language of Dun Chaoin,
Not the lyrics but the air
That goes through the sounds and flow of Munster,
The music the stranger hears
A local music
That its speakers do not hear,
A music I have never heard
because I was so near
And I in harness to the sense
A music you will hear in Munster yet
Even where they 've abandoned dialect*

Sean O Riordán

1. European Theatre Climate

A pan-European overview at the mid-nineties cannot but show a degree of optimism as to the resilience of theatre in the face of all kinds of threats. From rising costs to changing social habits, audio-visual competition and inner-city insecurity, theatre has survived at least three decades of grave challenges. European theatre has clearly survived, thanks to public support, as its case has been politically linked to that of other essential cultural values such as language and heritage.

European policies in support to live drama show many common features in the two main traditional blocks (East/West) of theatre practice. Two different blocks in the history and practice but condemned to face the same challenges in our decade. Unable to escape “Baumol’s Disease”, public policy for European

theatre has had to apply since 1985 a number of measures in order to face a common 20-point agenda:

- stop growth in running costs at permanent institutions
- react to the increasingly older age profile of audiences
- ensure a transfer of revenue from electronic arts to live arts
- insert performing arts in socio-cultural development strategies
- place performing arts in tourism brochures
- renew training methods in drama schools and conservatories
- expand export opportunities
- improve employment conditions for performers and technical staff
- introduce new technologies to performing venues and shows
- establish new forms of co-operation through international networking
- protect new work from immediate market demands
- bring intellectual prestige back to European Theatre
- favour a multidisciplinary and multimedia approach to new theatre
- create new subsidy and co-operation structures for theatre at European level
- stimulate a debate on the role of drama-based performing arts in 21st Century creativity

Beyond those challenges which could be seen to be common to all European countries, there are regional or sectoral difficulties which nevertheless cause widespread concern.

First, the plight of minority languages with regard to their drama expression. The live word in theatres is crucial to the survival of small population languages. Similarly, theatre activity is essential to migrant communities severed from their major language groups. Linked to this predicament there are the problems of translation and publishing to prevent neglect and discrimination of lesser-used languages and small-population cultures.

Second, the problems of theatre reform (legislation, administration, artistic policy) especially in relation to the Central and Eastern European scene where multiple transformations in politics and society demand new responses from an otherwise reasonably strong theatre sector. The reform faces severe problems with the retraining of a large labour-force, the renewal of repertoire, the promotion of touring and the creation of paying audiences. This reform can not any longer be undertaken on domestic grounds but should take into account a wider European context.

Third, the Festivals crisis. New opportunities for travel, co-productions, residencies and transmission of information render Festivals less attractive whilst their costs keep climbing if competitiveness is to be safeguarded. Conversely, private sponsorship does not respond to expectations and the prospect of increased tourism defeats the original idea of the festival as a specialised pilgrimage to excellence. There is an urgent need for the renewal of collective rituals for the Thespian community.

Fourth, European theatre development seems to be increasingly prone to a new split; that of Drama environments with audio-visual production and those without it. The existence of cinema and TV production fosters a specialised set of professional communities with transferable skills in acting, directing, sound and film recording, dubbing, designing and marketing. This is becoming in some cities and regions a determining factor to the survival of a flexible theatre scene. Cities and regions remote from the centres of audio-visual production find it increasingly difficult to carry out a sustainable theatre life.

Fifth, the proliferation of performing arts is in some countries a reflection of the new political appeal of cultural activities. Culture has climbed some steps up the political agenda and this is to be welcomed by the arts community. However, this growth is leading in many countries to a supply-oriented theatre market where few initiatives have a chance to settle down. The emphasis on short-term projects and light structures hinders the maturity of arts processes. Theatre can only compete with audio-visual supply in the medium/long-term arena not at the ephemeral tempo imposed by the media-oriented industries.

The degree to which European theatre policies East and West, North and South have been able to face such challenges varies according to many factors, not always presided over by financial imperatives. Elements such as cultural identity drive, the existence of available infrastructure or the cross-influence of other arts sectors such as visual arts or music have been as important as the push fuelled by political or economic resources.

Success or failure have been dependent more on cultural climate than on hard cash investment. Theatre resurgence is a factor of a social expressive will without which infrastructure and money do not achieve desired aims. It is not surprising that some of the innovatory theatre in the last decades in Europe has emerged from communities stressing their cultural self-respect; Poland, Flanders and Catalonia in the 80's or Romania in the 90's.

The catalyst for such acceleration in theatre's relevance has normally been found in local communities. Whenever the urban drive has been coupled with artistic risk, results have tended to be positive. This has normally been due to the development of city cultures (more than in often medium-size towns) and a capacity to apply globalised strategies with regards to production, distribution, audience building and education.

Public support to theatre has been more successful when applied to a variety of projects, including the containment of commercial venues as well as the experimental scene. The importance of the amateur and semi-professional drama has been recognised as a key factor to the contemporary relevance of theatre.

Finally, the dictum “think local/act global” seems to prove true with regard to the development of contemporary theatre. A vision of the world as a stage is more than ever to the point as we see small companies performing, in the five continents, plays often based on very local issues. Successful theatre strategies have broken market barriers beyond language restrictions.

In a world context, European theatre represents a cultural reservoir of social cohesiveness as well as creative talent which can be expanded to other spheres of arts and communication.

Theatre developments in the ‘70’s and 80’s are at the basis of contemporary European film and TV industries; drama influence is also crucial in rock performances, opera, dance and visual arts installations. Contemporary European writing owes also a great deal to the theatre environment and it has become fashionable for poets and novelists to try their hand again at drama. In this respect it mustn’t be forgotten that the stage is still the rod by which acting capacity is measured; film or TV successes are to be validated in the face to face encounter with audiences.

The cultural development of the information society with its multimedia and interactive trends, suggests a new life for XXIst century theatre as it has always been the home of interactive live creativity.

Summing up, success of theatre policies seems to hinge on the use of number of levers such as cultural identity, the cross-influence of parallel disciplines, local consensus and world projection.

2. Irish conditions

As seen from a pan-European perspective contemporary Irish theatre conditions look amongst the most favourable in the whole of the Council of Europe perimeter, as the factors referred to in the last paragraph of section 1 seem to be substantially present.

Irish theatre banks on one of the strongest internal and external cultural identity patterns in Europe. Here matters regarding the need to safeguard and promote Irish language theatre add an extra dimension to the identity issue. The cross-influence of parallel disciplines such as music and poetry build a strong creative environment in which drama grows with great self-confidence. An element which has been traditionally expressed through the world projection of classic Irish drama. With regard to the factor described above as “local consensus”,

there is a need for nuancing the details. This is particularly evident if we look at this on a transnational basis. Similar points could be raised with regard to interdisciplinary work and internationalisation of projects.

On a European perspective, there are three elements which could be said to stand out in defining the particular traits of contemporary Irish theatre:

1. "Not the lyrics but the air"

Irish theatre is often criticised for being too "Irish centred", obsessed with the inner workings of Irish society, the glorification of local characters and the recurrence of classic topics such as family, religion, country to city transition or emigration. This is all put down to the need to explore one's own identity; a need which is attributed in the Theatre Review to the youthfulness of the Irish state. But the emphasis on cultural identity soul-searching through the theatre is not exclusive to new nation states. Such exercise is found in all solid contemporary drama traditions headed by Poland, Germany and (on and off) Britain and Italy. In the view of this observer the looking inward of Irish theatre perhaps owes its precedence to a defensive need rather than to a "nation building" drive. The socio-political history of contemporary Ireland seems to warrant the need to put up defensive barriers on the cultural front, as difficult economic and political issues can only be tackled through a transnational approach. This culturally defensive trend could explain the so-called aesthetic conservatism of Irish theatre and its stubborn reverence to the written word. Saving the words (even if they are Irish/English) is saving the nations' identity. But they must be words emanating from the people and uttered in a way that audiences can identify with.

Irish theatre is said to be author-orientated but the author is in his/her turn very much audience-orientated. Authors and audiences seal a pact to protect Irishness; their alliance prevents them from challenging one another in the face of all kinds of threats. This inner nexus between author and audience could be seen as the bedrock of defensiveness in contemporary Irish theatre. And yet, in such an alliance lies the promise of creative developments in one of the most exciting theatre scenes in Europe.

2. The local connection

Theatre structures are comparatively centralised and the nature of their legal and financial basis makes them very much "arts-orientated". The Review states that less than 2% of theatre revenue comes from Local Authorities (IR£247,000) comprising all types of contribution; from grants to venues to occasional funding for hiring shows. This percentage is in contrast to the average European involvement by Local Authorities which would stand on average at levels well above 25%. (It is noted that Ireland does not count on a standard system of local rates although there could be other means to empower Local Authorities to deal with a large degree of autonomy with proximity services).

The absence of local input into theatre financing and policy-making impinges on the role of citizens in the cultural process. Citizens are regarded only as

“audiences”. There seems to be room for effort in the direction of linking theatre provision with wider local and regional interests, including economic development, employment, city image-building, etc. In other words, theatre should help audiences to become citizens ready to integrate the live performance into their overall growth and development.

With audiences doubling in 15 years to reach the 37% figure it could be expected that theatre would have been considered as part of Local Authority priorities. This is particularly relevant in view of the use of EU structural funds. It also affects the strategies for touring and theatre dissemination throughout the country.

3. *“Short circuits” in touring and production*

Touring is the blessing of small countries as it may bring about substantial returns from production investment. Short distances allow for performers and audiences to return home after the event and on an artistic level, touring facilitates the “encounter” of the art work among a variety of audiences thus enriching its communication profile.

The Review states that about half (1994) of the productions did go on tour (only 6% of which toured in a European country other than the UK). Although the average number of visits stands at around 10 localities, 9% of shows visited more than 50 venues. Attendances are reported generous with averages between 50% and 75% capacity.

However, there seems to be an imbalance - avoided in Europe perhaps only in France and in the Netherlands - between the programming and the production roles of venues. The report itself expresses misgivings about venues which in some cases tend to act rather as railway stations in a single line. That is, with little active role in creating an original style of programming, tailored to audiences, and to a “theatre project” with its own logic. A further effect of this imbalance is that of preventing on-going work of an interdisciplinary nature. Interdisciplinary approaches to arts production could benefit more from the richness of the Irish Arts, especially music and poetry but also, the audio-visual industries and visual arts. However, such attempts at interdisciplinarity can be hampered by an emphasis on touring.

Concomitant to these matters there is a definite lack of foreign exchanges involving Irish theatre. Such alleged deficit could be regarded as part of the same touring system. Foreign exchanges make sense if they are based on co-productions and artistic blends. This means the capacity to engage in long-term processes and an accumulated and multi-layered experience of international theatre circuits and methods. The “short circuits” of Irish theatre dissemination are a peculiar feature in the context of European theatre co-operation.

3. Some European Cases

I have chosen three European cases to act as reference to the comments on the Irish theatre environment as expressed in the above paragraphs. The cases chosen are Italy, Finland and Slovenia.

Finland and Slovenia present relatively similar demographic situations and theatre structures which seem to lend themselves to interesting comparison with Ireland. The Italian case presents some general features which stand in an intermediate decentralisation position between the Irish situation and federalised structures elsewhere.

The Finnish case speaks of heavy local involvement as is the case in the Scandinavian tradition, whereas in Slovenia, centralised structures survive unscathed.

1. Italy

Italy is one of the few European countries where theatre has enjoyed a high degree of continuity in the last 400 years. This stability could be broken in the course of this decade due to the effects of diminishing public financing, currency devaluation and the restructuring of the cultural portfolios. The abolition by referendum of the Ministry of Tourism and Performing Arts in 1993 put a further onus on local and regional support for theatre.

Three elements stand out as relevant to the Irish case. First, the combination of central government and local support. 1990 figures show a similar degree of financing from central state and the municipal and regional budgets:

	General Cultural Provision	Performing Arts
State:	56,3%	51%
Regions:	13%	16%

The progressive disengagement of central government support is biting into local resources while at the same time recent political and administrative conditions have paralysed many of the municipal and regional resources. The general pattern is evolving towards further decentralisation on the basis of local and regional projects developing their own aims and structures.

Second, Italy sports a tradition of repertory theatres (Teatri Stabili) closely linked to Local Authorities. This is a model closely related to that of "lyric theatres" and symphony orchestras which seems to be deeply imbedded in the Italian notion of theatre structuring. In 1992 there were 14 such production venues with 10 private theatres also receiving central state support. However, central government grants to 'Teatri Stabili' have dropped substantially: 51.2% in 1986 to 43.7% in 1991 and they keep diminishing. Grants to independent

production and touring companies have also dropped 35% since 1990. As the country stabilises its public sector, however, there are signs that things are picking up on the basis of local and regional initiative. The trend suggests a new balance between public expenditure on repertory theatres and small production companies. Local and regional networks will keep controlling touring circuits locally and internationally.

Third, Italian theatre is considered to be actor-orientated. Although training and union structures are weak, there is a national star system which operates spectacularly (Dario Fo, Vittorio Gassman...). Nevertheless, Italian theatre feels neglected in relation to its contribution to contemporary Italian culture. 80% of central government subsidies for the performing arts are granted to music, opera and dance whereas only 19% are devoted to theatre.

52% of performing arts audiences, however, correspond to theatre goers. The decline in film production and culturally ambitious TV projects has affected complementary theatre structures, especially in Rome and Milan. Conversely, the wiping out of independent theatre companies at the beginning of the 90's has negatively affected risk and innovation.

Theatre audiences are ageing and there are substantial differences between theatre practices North and South of the country. Ticket sales show the following picture:

North: 51%

Centre: 24%

South: 15%

Islands: 10%

The crisis in Italian theatre is related to that of other social and political structures in the country but there are signs that Italian civic regeneration will bring a new impulse to theatre. The emergence of new creative poles such as the "Fabbrica" in Florence and the work of Grotowski in Pontedera, seem to point in that direction.

2. Finland.

Theatre tradition is strong in Finland thanks to a robust amateur sector. Overall public policy is entrusted to The National Theatre Council although regional arts councils are growing in importance. As in the previous case, descriptive references can be summarised in three separate sections:

First the distribution of public responsibilities. The structure of the performing arts can be derived from the following 1993 scheme:

Note: Figures in Finnish Marks

	MUSIC	THEATRE /OPERA/DANCE
Professional 'groups'	30	63
Performances	1.596	13.134
Audience	754.321	4.230.000
Municipal subsidy	111.352.724	273.971.400
State subsidy	57.127.034	316.004.600
Own revenue	18.954.090	101.412.000
	MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURE	STATE EXPENDITURE
Theatre	260.000.000	190.000.000
Opera	11.250.000	122.500.000
Dance	2.075.000	4.187.000

Second, the structure of repertory and touring provision:

In 1993, an act of Parliament established statutory grants to certain theatres and orchestras. This offer of stability was made in exchange for substantial savings in running costs. The shift freed some local resources which could be devoted to less stable and more experimental types of work. However, the financial crisis in Finland and the high levels of unemployment have slowed down reform.

Given the extraordinary length and width of the country, the low demographic density and the harsh climate conditions, touring is not an easily feasible proposition. However, there are centres of theatre diffusion on a regional basis from which outreach projects are managed. Regionalisation in Finland is almost a geographic imperative alongside political and artistic needs. The general trend however, involves the streamlining of permanent structures and the stimulation of locally designed theatre projects.

Creativity in Finnish theatre is well on its way with strong ingredients coming from the visual arts and music. New writing is active and this is evident in the figures for new plays:

(1992- '93season)

Genres	Total number of plays	Finish 'premieres'	Foreign 'premieres'
Drama	242	47	37
Musical theatre	46	6	3
Children's drama	68	15	5
Puppet Theatre	36	8	2

However, creativity does not always match current international innovative trends. Finnish theatre works on a sense of Finnish identity assertion which does not always look into the past for fuel but rather to the contemporary positioning of the country, especially since its entry into the European Union.

The need to look for an identity in the present rather than in the past is helped by the multicultural nature of Finnish society; Finland has a strong Swedish speaking theatre (with its own training conservatories). Similarly, provision for performing arts is available to the northern Sami population. The question is whether Finnish theatre, comparatively freed from the past, can deal with the future. Here, the need for innovation and internationalisation constitute major challenges.

3. Slovenia

The Slovenian case shows a process of deep reform in all structures of theatre production and distribution. Theatre has enjoyed a solid tradition in the country with 15% of the Arts budget spent on it as compared with 16.5% for music and dance. (The music budget includes subsidy to the opera houses in Ljubljana and Maribor).

As is the case in most Central and Eastern European countries, over 90% of the theatre budget is devoted to the upkeep of eleven repertory companies. Only 1.5% goes to independent companies, 5% to touring, and 3% to festivals. In contrast, nearly 20% of Slovenian tours abroad are undertaken by independent and experimental companies.

With regard to area-based structures, it must be noted that the lack of cultural autonomy in cultural policies has meant that little professional drama can happen without state support.

Slovenia is asserting its own independent identity in the aftermath of the Yugoslav Federation. Its strategic proximity to Austria, Germany, Italy, Hungary and Croatia favours international relations; an opportunity readily embraced by Slovenians in their effort to distance their social and political situation from that of other ex-Yugoslav republics. Besides, Slovenian theatre has to take into account the existence of a multicultural society and the plight of refugee communities from the Balkans.

Slovenian authorities and theatre practitioners alike would agree on the fact that theatre needs deep reform in some familiar directions; promoting de-centralised theatre projects, balancing resources devoted to traditional repertory venues with those granted to small emerging professional theatre projects and sorting out the role of theatre in the new democratic nation. On this new path, theatre has to take advantage of its capacity to be at the forefront of social modernisation and cultural internationalisation in the country, consistent with the policies on decentralisation and training.

4. Common Futures

In conclusion, this brief examination of Irish Theatre/European Theatre (needs and policies), suggests the following points:

1. Theatre is losing intellectual and social weight in Europe as other forms of expression take the lead in adapting to markets and sensitivities. The Irish experience, with its intensive theatre presence in social life, contains valuable elements which point the way to put theatre back in its rightful place in social life.
2. Traditional theatre institutions are no longer to be considered the sole shrine of cultural identity in drama. What really makes a 'national theatre' is the sum of all theatre experience in a country. It is the time for modesty and sharing rather than for monopolies and mystical precedence.
3. Heavy theatre structures are in a process of streamlining costs and programmes. This might entail a loss of quality and productivity. On the other hand, a move to more self-sufficient structures, could bring about a new relationship with audiences as well as new sources of financing.
4. Decentralisation has become a must in the logic of subsidiarity but also in the logic of local and regional development. Only by promoting different forms of relationships between theatre and area-based growth, can a variety of projects emerge and be sustainable.
5. Internationalisation of theatre productions, training, distribution and general debate can only play to the advantage of strong theatre traditions like that of Ireland. Beyond that, Ireland could play a crucial role in the articulation of theatre efforts at all levels internationally; from becoming the distributor of a much-needed database of information on resources and opportunities for co-production, to the renewal of theatre management training.
6. The leadership of Ireland in poetry and drama should be further put into operation in establishing a new focus for theatre writing and very especially for those aspects of drama relating to audio-visual production, Pan-European initiatives in this respect would be generally welcomed abroad.
7. The richness of data concerning Irish theatre should lead a new generation of evaluation processes in the cultural field; the Council of Europe and the European Union should be made partners to the follow-up to this Review initiative and see their way to transferring it to other countries.

As a final comment, this reviewer would like to express thanks for the opportunity to take part in this exercise in the hope that most of its lessons will be applicable to Ireland and beyond. Many of the ideas sketched here deserve further elaboration. Now the debate is open and I hope that all concerned with the subject will have the chance to take part in it

THEATRE IN IRELAND

A research project by Paula Clancy, Teresa Brannick
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The Graduate School of Business
University College Dublin

in association with
Cioers and Lybrand Corporate Finance

THEATRE IN IRELAND

CONTENTS

- 62 Background to the study:**
Scope, Objectives and Methodology

PART ONE

- Section One **68 Structure of Sector**

PART TWO

- 79 Introduction to Part Two**
- Section Two **89 Resource Base**
- Section Three **105 Funding**
- Section Four **114 Repertoire**
- Section Five **125 Touring**
- Section Six **142 Audience**
- Section Seven **163 National Theatre Society**
- Section Eight **171 Arts Council**

APPENDICES

- 177 I List of Companies
- 178 II List of Key Informants
- 179 III Additional Tables
- 184 IV Database of Repertoire
- 194 V Arts Council Touring
- 197 VI Bibliography

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BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY: SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The specific context of the review is that described in *The Arts Plan, 1995-1997*, prepared by the Arts Council in 1994 at the request of the Government. The Arts Plan states that drama in Ireland has either 'reached a watershed or is in a painful transition stage' and that a review of theatre is needed to provide the Council with the policy context for planning for and developing the sector into the next century.

The Theatre Review is being undertaken against a background which offers grounds for considerable optimism but also major challenges in relation to Irish theatre.

Significant developments in drama in the past decade include:

- A substantial increase in attendance patterns at live performances since 1981: an increase from 20% to 37% of the population;
- Close to half of the population now watch or listen to a play on television and radio;
- The development of a regional infrastructure in the form of professional theatre companies and the development of regional touring circuits;
- Increasing numbers and significance of commercial venues and proliferation of theatre companies;
- Developments in the amateur drama movement including the establishment of dedicated theatre spaces;
- Development of arts centres;
- A theatre sector which is valued at an estimated £17m turnover.

Against this healthy picture of growth and development, on the other hand, are a number of constraints and weaknesses.

Among the main concerns are:

- The level of grant aid to theatre has now plateaued at circa .33 of Arts Council grant in aid, about £5.5m in 1995;
- Many theatre companies, including the National Theatre company, are experiencing great difficulties in finding the necessary resources to continue to function at an acceptable level;
- There is a significant dependency on grant aid, as few theatre companies are self - sufficient;

- Many existing companies function by suffering poor employment conditions, creating a ‘hidden subsidy’;
- Training for the theatre profession remains inadequate. There is no national network of training centres either for performers or technicians. There is also an absence of training for playwrights in preparing work for television.

Purpose and Objectives of the Research

The purpose of this report is to prepare the groundwork for the Theatre Review by providing a research-based, detailed overview of the theatre sector in the Republic of Ireland.

Research Objectives

1. Description of the sector including organisational data on scale and type of organisation; management structures; infrastructure; staffing; sources of funding; extent and nature of the repertoire and of touring; marketing strategies and audience data including profile, capacity, attendance and participation.
2. Identification of key strategic issues in relation to the future development of theatre in Ireland.
3. Reanalysis of audience data nationally, (available to the consultants through the data set collected for the study *The Public and the Arts*) in relation to issues of changing patterns of behaviour; emerging preferences and attitudes in relation to drama/theatre; issues of access both in terms of region and socio-economic group.

Scope of the Research

The theatre sector in the Republic of Ireland can broadly be described as operating at two levels - amateur and professional. The professional level incorporates production companies and venues; playwrights, festivals and theatre service businesses. (Coopers and Lybrand, 1994).

The scope of this study extends to the sector in its entirety in terms of the identification and discussion of relevant strategic issues. The detailed description of its structure is confined to professional theatre companies and venues.

Research Approach

The approach adopted was both multi-methodological and integrated.

1. Documentary Sources

There have been a number of recent research reports commissioned from independent researchers on the cultural sector which have provided valuable information on the sector, principally. *Managing the Cultural Sector* (1994), *The Economic and Employment Significance of the Cultural Industries* (1994), *The Public and the Arts* (1994), and *The Economics of the Arts in Ireland* (1994).

The Arts Council, too, has built up a significant body of data, both current and archival on the theatre sector and this material was made available to the consultants. (See Appendix VI).

2. Interviews with Key Informants

Identification of key strategic issues in relation to the future development of theatre in Ireland was the second major objective of the research and the principal data source was the information collected in the course of in-depth interviews with a number of theatre practitioners.

Through the analysis of various policy documents a number of issues were identified and discussed with a total of 20 key informants¹.

Broadly the issues covered included a discussion of the overall current status of theatre in the Republic of Ireland; the resource base in the sector, both human and physical; the funding situation; the nature and extent of the repertoire, originating both in Ireland and abroad; touring both in practice and in terms of Arts Council policy; the audience, the National Theatre Society; and the Arts Council.

The views of Arts Council personnel were also sought in relation to the issues raised in the course of this research.

3. Survey of theatre production companies and venues

The Survey Population

A total of seventy-nine theatre companies and venues were included in the survey² and seventy-three (92%) of these completed the questionnaire in whole or in part.

1 A total of twenty-two people were identified in consultation with the Arts Council. Unfortunately it was not possible to arrange a mutually convenient time for meeting two of those identified. See Appendix II for list of key informants.

2 Ninety-four organisations were issued with a questionnaire. Fifteen of these organisations were subsequently excluded from the study because (i) they did not meet the criteria for inclusion (i.e. established for longer than one year and, if a production company, having staged at least one production in the past two years), or (ii) had ceased to operate or (Hi) were found to be a unit of an organisation already included in the survey.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections.

Section A sought information in relation to the legal and management structure of the company; its employment structure and its financial basis. Information was also sought on employment requirements of the organisation, on its training activity and on its marketing capabilities.

Section B, using a series of statement items, sought the personal attitudes and views of the heads of each of the organisations surveyed on a number of key issues. The statement items were constructed around the key issues and dominant views emerging both from the analysis of the interviews with the key informants and from the documentary material available to the consultants. The purpose of these questions was to provide the researchers with some broad indicators of the extent to which the views expressed by those interviewed were representative of a broader community of theatre practitioners.

Section C gathered information on all drama productions (522) originating within the Republic of Ireland over a five year period, including the number of productions, details on the writers and the directors; the nature of the productions, their scale, length of run and financial outcome; the locations at which each production was staged; and measures of attendance and capacity.

This section also gathered information on the extent of touring (234 of the 522 productions were toured), which together with an analysis of the Arts Council database on touring provided detailed information on touring trends.

Section D gathered information on all drama productions originating outside the Republic of Ireland (214), also over a five year period, including the number of productions, details on the writers and the directors; and the nature of the production.

The questionnaire was posted to the organisations during July, 1995. During August, 1995 a team of interviewers under the direction of the Survey Policy Unit of the National College of Industrial Relations contacted each of the organisations to answer queries in relation to the questionnaire, to assist with its completion where necessary and to collect the completed questionnaires.

The data was coded and computer analysed using the SPSS package in University College Dublin.

4. Analysis of Audience Data

In 1994 a major, nation-wide, representative survey was undertaken in relation to participation in and attitudes to the arts in Ireland. (The Public and the Arts, 1994). For the purposes of this research a detailed reanalysis of the data collected for this survey was undertaken.

The reanalysis involved a more detailed examination of the data collected on the theatre-goer. The key variables of location, gender, age and social class were analysed in relation to

- play attendance, extent and frequency
- involvement in amateur drama
- purchase of work of playwrights
- access to plays through home-based technology
- attitudes to funding priorities for the arts.

5. Arts Council Touring Database

The Arts Council made available to the consultants its database of information on all productions which were funded for touring by the Council in the period 1982 -1994. A total of 115 productions were funded in that period. Complete information was available on 94 of these productions.

A coding frame was designed to make the data suitable for computerised analysis and the data was analysed using the SPSS computer package.

Notes to Tables:

- (i) Where the term in percentages is included as part of the table title it indicates that categories are not mutually exclusive and may not sum to 100%.
- (ii) The information on the National Theatre Society (NTS) is provided separately in Section Seven of the Report, with the exception of financial and employment information which is included in Section One. Where the NTS is included the relevant tables will indicate the total number of organisations as 73, where it is excluded the total number of organisations will be given as 72.

Structure of the Report

The Report is divided into two parts.

Part One, Section One describes the structure of the sector: the legal and management structure of the company; its employment structure and its financial basis.

Part Two, comprises an introduction and seven separate sections which organises the findings of the study under eight broad headings. Each section, including an introductory section, is devoted to one of eight themes:

- Overview of the current status of theatre in Ireland and a description of different perspectives of theatre practitioners on the sector;
- The resource base in the sector, both human and physical;
- The funding situation;
- The nature and extent of the repertoire, originating both in Ireland and abroad;
- Touring both in practice and in terms of Arts Council policy;
- The audience,
- The National Theatre Society; and
- The Arts Council.

The selection of these themes and the relative balance given to each one in the report, reflects first, the quantity and quality of information available and, second, the importance attributed to each one by those interviewed.

In the treatment of these themes the approach followed is to integrate the disparate sources of information in relation to each i.e. the survey data, the information from key informants, the reanalysis of the audience survey data and the Arts Council touring database and the analysis of documentary sources. In all cases the particular source of each piece of information is indicated, for example the reader is referred to the relevant tables in relation to the discussion of survey and database data.

The opinions and views as expressed by a key informant are provided in the text where it is felt that such expressed views best illustrate the point being made. Opinions are not attributed to any one individual, both for purposes of anonymity and also because they are used as illustrations of more widely-held views. The key informants were chosen to provide insights into the widest possible range of views on each of the issues discussed. As such all the views expressed on any issue are outlined in the report, that is whether it represents a dominant view or one held by any one of the respondents. In so far as it was feasible within the constraints of the questionnaire design, data on the extent to which these views are shared by a wider community of theatre practitioners, i.e. the heads of organisations surveyed, was gathered through Section B of the survey questionnaire.

Documentary sources used are indicated where relevant.

PART ONE

SECTION ONE

STRUCTURE OF THE SECTOR

Two recently-completed, major reports - *Managing the Cultural Sector* and *The Economic and Employment Significance of the Cultural Industries in Ireland* - have described and analysed the structure of the arts sector in Ireland, of which the theatre sector is a significant element. (Clancy, 1994; Coopers & Lybrand, 1994).

At its broadest, professional theatre in the Republic of Ireland can be categorised into production companies, whose principal function is to bring a particular theatrical work through all aspects of its production, and receiving venues, which in this context are either dedicated theatrical venues or arts centres which have a dedicated theatrical space. Production companies are further sub-classified into those which are associated with a particular theatrical venue and those which stage their productions in a variety of venues.

Companies and venues are also categorised into those which are totally commercial in their financial structure and those, the vast majority (71 % in 1995), which are subsidised in some way by the Arts Council.

The arts sector in general and theatre as a sub-sector is comprised of predominantly smallscale companies, concentrated around the major centres of population. Other characteristics of the sector include a greater than average use of non-standard forms of work and an extraordinarily heavy reliance on government employment schemes and on volunteers.

This section of the report builds on and, where relevant, uses the survey data to update the information gathered in the earlier studies with specific reference to professional production companies and theatrical venues. It describes the formal structure of the professional sector; provides a financial analysis and describes its employment structure.

Formal Structure of the Organisation

Almost three-quarters (71%) of all organisations included in the present survey are production companies. These can be subdivided into venue-based production companies (7%), non-venue based production companies (49%) and venue-based production companies which also operate as receiving venues (15%).

Seventeen per cent of organisations define themselves as receiving venues and a further 12% are Arts Centres.

TABLE 1.1 Type of Organisation

Type of Organisation	Percentages
A non-venue based production company	49
A venue-based production company	7
A venue-based production company which also operates as a receiving venue	15
A receiving venue with a dedicated theatre space	17
An Arts Centre	12
TOTAL NUMBER	72

By far the most common legal status adopted by organisations surveyed is that of “Company limited by guarantee”. More than half (55%) of respondents had this status. A further 17% were companies limited by shares while just 3% were co-operatives (Industrial and Providents Society). Almost one-quarter (24%) were un-incorporated and had, therefore, no legal status. It is reasonable to speculate that the latter are the newer companies which have just arrived on the scene.

TABLE 1.2 Legal Status of Organisation

Legal Status	Percentages
Company limited by guarantee	55
Company limited by shares	17
Co-operative (Industrial and Providents Society)	3
Un-incorporated Body	24
Incomplete Information	1
TOTAL NUMBER	72

1 *The formal structure of the National Theatre Society is described in Section Seven.*

Most of the companies are of recent origin with only 17% dating from before 1975. Sixty four per cent have been formed since 1985, 33% since 1990. More than one-third (36%) of all companies, however, were formed before-1984 and have, therefore, been in existence for 10-20 years or longer.

TABLE 1.3 Year in which Organisation was Formed

Year	Percentages
Since 1990	33
1985-1989	31
1975-1984	19
Pre1975	17
TOTAL NUMBER	72

While 36% of companies existed before 1985, only 21% were registered before that date. Companies would appear, therefore, to wait to register until they have acquired some degree of stability. One quarter of all companies have registered since 1990 and a further 21% were registered in the 1985-1989 period.

TABLE 1.4 Year of Registration

Year	Percentages
1990-1995	25
1985-1989	21
Pre 1985	21
Not Applicable, Not Registered	31
Incomplete Information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	72

By far the most common arrangement is for Boards of Directors to be the legal owners of the organisation. This was the case in 64% of the organisations surveyed. In a further 8% of cases, the legal owners are the shareholders. Eight per cent of organisations are the property of individuals/private concerns and 6% are trusts. In only 1 % of cases is the organisation the property of a local authority

Table 1.5 Legal Owner of The Organisation

Legal Owner	Percentages
Board of Directors	64
Local Authorities	1
Individual/private concern	8
Trust	6
Shareholders	8
Other	12
TOTAL NUMBER	72

More than three-quarters (78%) of all companies has a Board of Directors. Other forms of management structure adopted include Committees (14%) and Boards of Members (4%). Sixty-one per cent of management boards meet regularly, i.e. once a month or once every three months. A further 1 % meet annually More than one-quarter (26%), however, meet only irregularly or on an ad hoc basis.

Table 1.6 Management Structure of Organisation

Type	Percentages
Board of Directors	78
Board of Members	4
Committee	14
Other	3
Incomplete Information	1
TOTAL NUMBER	72

Table 1.7 Frequency of Board/Committee Meeting

Frequency	Percentages
Once a month	37
Once every three months	24
Annually	1
Ad hoc/irregularly	26
Other	11
TOTAL NUMBER	72

Financial Overview

Four respondents did not provide information pertaining to the financial performance of their company / organisation. As such, the overview outlined below relates to 69 companies (including the National Theatre Society), and includes all the major production companies and receiving venues.

Aggregate income

The aggregate income of these 69 respondents for their financial year ending in 1994 was IR£17.066 million. The breakdown of this income is tabled below:

TABLE 1.8 Theatre Sector -Sources of Income

Sources of Income	IR£000	%
Box office income	8,038	47
Ancillary earned income (catering & merchandising etc)	842	5
Sponsorships / donations	443	3
Arts Council		
- Revenue grants	4,508	26
- Other grants (excl capital grants)	549	3
Local authority grants	247	2
FÁS/Dept of Labour	1,686	10
Other income	753	4
Total	17066	100

Approximately 52% of total income was derived from commercial activities. All but seven respondents reported earning box office receipts which at IR£8.038 million represented 47% of the total. Thirty-three companies earned income from catering and other merchandising totalling IR£842,000 or 5%.

The Arts Council is the single largest funding agency providing grants of some IR£5.057 million, or just under 30% of the total income of which IR£4.508 million was revenue grants and the remaining IR£0.549 million comprised other grants, including those given for touring. Of the 69 companies responding to this question, 28 production companies / venues were not in receipt of Arts Council revenue funding during 1994.

Income received from FÁS / Department of Labour by 30 respondents in respect of trainees on FÁS supported training schemes and initiatives totalled IR£1.686 million, or 10% of total income.

Sponsorship / donations were raised by 39 respondents totalling IR£443,000 or 3% of income. Funding provided by Local Authorities was IR£247,000 (2%). The largest amount of sponsorship / donations raised by any one company was just under IR£66,000.

Other income, totalling IR£753,000, or 4% of the total was reported, which comprises primarily grants received from other grant-giving organisations.

Box office income

As noted earlier seven companies out of the 69 did not report any box office income. It is likely that such companies were involved in Theatre-in-Education or other non-chargeable performances. The distribution of box office income by respondent is outlined below.

Forty-seven respondents (68% of the total) had box office income of less than IR£50,000. Another 17 (25% of the total) had box office incomes between IR£51,000 and IR£500,000 while the remaining three had box office incomes between IR£1 million and IR£1.5 million.

Table 1.9 Analysis of Box Office Income

Income Category	No	Percentage	Total Income IR£000
Zero	7	10	0
IR£1,000-IR£10,000	20	29	89
IR£11,000-IR£20,000	14	20	207
IR£21,000-IR£50,000	6	9	209
IR£51,000-IR£100,000	6	9	472
IR£101,000-IR£150,000	6	9	831
IR£151,000-IR£200,000	4	5	669
IR£201,000-IR£500,000	1	2	312
IR£501,000 -IR£1 million	2	3	1,467
IR£1 million-IR£1.5 million	3	4	3,782
Total	69	100	8,038

Patterns of expenditure

The 69 respondents also provided a breakdown of their expenditure by category. Total expenditure for this group in 1994 was IR£17.822 million, which exceeded total income by IR£756,000 and would tend to suggest that there is a level of bank borrowings / overdraft facilities in place. An analysis of expenditure is outlined next page:

Table 1.10 Analysis of Expenditure

Expenditure category	IRE000	%
Staff costs	6,266	35
Payments to FÁS trainees	1,430	8
Administration costs	1,961	11
Production costs (excl touring costs)	4,627	26
Marketing publicity find touring)	1,091	6
Touring costs (production, travel and accommodation)	515	3
Costs of ancillary earned income(stocks etc)	699	4
Financial costs (interest, leases, etc)	331	2
Depreciation	274	1
Other costs	628	4
Total	17,882	100

The single largest expenditure category was that of staff costs which reflects the labour intensive nature of theatrical productions. Altogether staff costs totalled IR£6.266 million, or 35% of the total. Thirteen respondents (or 19% of the total) reported that they did not pay any wages / salaries. A factor which supports the view that there is a high level of no pay/low pay in this sector. Payments to those on FÁS training schemes came to another IR£1.43 million or 8%.

Production costs, which are those costs associated with staging a production performance were the next highest at IRE4.627 million or 26% of the total. This is followed by administration at IRE1.961 million, 11% of the total. Marketing and PR costs were IR£ 1,091,000 or 6%. Costs directly associated with touring were IR£515,000 or 3%.

As noted earlier. Ancillary Earned Income was IR£842,000. The direct costs associated with this income was IR£699,000 or 4% of total. Financial costs and depreciation charges were reported at 2% and 1 % respectively.

Capital expenditure

The survey also sought information relating to the levels of capital expenditure in such areas as buildings, office equipment, production equipment and so forth. The findings in relation to the 73 respondents for the three year period 1992-1994 inclusive is set out overleaf:

Table 1.11 Capital Expenditure

	1992	1993	1994
Number of respondents			
incurring capital expenditure	25	29	38
	IRE000	IRE000	IRE000
Total capital expenditure	826	386	626
Average capital expenditure per respondent	33	13	16
Maximum capital expenditure by any one company / venue	340	186	215

Overall the level of capital expenditure in the sector is very low with approximately one-third of all respondents incurring expenditure of this nature in 1992 and 1993, rising to just over a half in 1994.

The capital expenditure profile is one of a small number of companies, primarily those with theatrical venues, incurring a significant level of expenditure, with the remaining companies incurring relatively low levels of expenditure.

Arts Council Subsidy

More than three-quarters (78%) of all organisations had received some form of financial subsidy from the Arts Council at some point.

It should be noted that more than a fifth (21 %) has never had an Arts Council subsidy.

The most frequently received form of subsidy was a revenue or annual subsidy (58%) and some 47% received revenue together with an additional subsidy (e.g. touring).

More than one-third (38%) of organisations were in receipt of a touring subsidy although just 3% of organisations received only a touring subsidy. The proportion who received touring and other funds excluding annual subsidy is 10%.

A total of 6% of companies received capital grants at one time or another. (See Table 1.12 overleaf).

Position in 1995

For 1995. 71% of all organisations are in receipt of some form of Arts Council subsidy. Almost three-fifths (59%) received an annual subsidy. Many of these (40% of the total) received additional subsidies.

Table 1.12 Organisations Who Have Received an Arts Council Subsidy

Nature of Subsidy	Ever Received a Subsidy %	Received a Subsidy in 1995 %
Annual Subsidy (revenue)	11	19
Annual Subsidy + Touring	6	7
Annual Subsidy + and other (excluding Touring)	19	26
Annual Subsidy + Touring + and other	22	7
Touring Subsidy	3	3
Touring + any other (excluding Annual Subsidy)	7	-
Project Awards	1	4
Capital Grants	6	1
Other	3	3
No subsidy	21	
No subsidy for 1995	-	29
Incomplete Information	1	-
TOTAL NUMBER	72	72

Seventeen per cent received a touring subsidy. This is much lower than those who had at sometime or another received such a subsidy, indicating that while an annual subsidy, once acquired, is likely to go on, touring subsidies are less continuous.

Four per cent are in receipt of a subsidy for project awards compared to 1 % who had ever received such a subsidy and the proportion of organisations in receipt of capital grants is only 1 % in 1995 compared with 6% who had ever received such awards, perhaps reflecting a change in funding policy.

Again, a significant proportion of organisations (29%) received no Arts Council subsidy in 1995.

Employment Overview

Numbers employed in the Sector

The total number of people employed in 1994 by theatre companies was 2,649. This figure includes full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary and freelance staff.

The total number of permanent jobs is estimated at 319, which represents a small percentage, 12% of the total.

*Table 1.13 Theatre Sector Employment Structure**

Total Number employed (i.e. including all temporary, freelance and part-time personnel)	2,649
Total permanent positions	319
Total estimated full-time equivalent jobs	755
Total estimated FTE on Government Employment Scheme	239

* Note: data in relation to employment in 1994

Full-Time Equivalent Jobs

Respondents were also asked to estimate the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs they provided. The total number of FTE jobs provided by all respondents was 755. Of these, 114 were employed by the National Theatre Society and a further 241 by the next top 6 employers. The remaining 400 jobs are divided among the other 65 companies.

Government employment schemes are a significant factor in employment in the theatre sector. Of the 755 FTE jobs, a total of 239 were supported by government employment schemes, principally the FÁS community employment scheme.

It should be noted that none of the National Theatre's 114 jobs were so supported and that only 33 of the 241 jobs provided by the next top six employers are. This means that 206 or slightly more than half of the FTE jobs in the rest of the professional theatre sector are supported through government-employment schemes.

Table 1.14 **Distribution and Composition of Full-time Equivalent Jobs**

	Numbers	Percentages
National Theatre Society	114	15
Top 6 next companies	241	32
Remainder of companies in sector	400	53
TOTAL NUMBER	755	100
of which: Government-supported FTE Jobs	239	32

Indications that the sector is a relatively low-paid one can be gauged from the average annual wage paid by the seven biggest employers. The average annual wage paid in these companies ranges from a high of £19,500 to a low of £3,700.

It is important to note that while these figures are a slightly lower overall estimate than those contained in the Coopers & Lybrand Report (1994), they confirm that the total number of full-time jobs or their equivalent generated by the sector is something less than 1,000².

2 *The Coopers and Lybrand figures are based on estimates for a different year and on a somewhat different population base*

PART TWO

INTRODUCTION

Part One described the formal structure of the theatre sector in Ireland. Part Two describes the sector in terms of a number of important themes, integrating material gathered from a number of sources, comprising survey data, interviews with key informants and documentary sources.

This introductory section looks at how theatre practitioners view the sector as a whole in terms of the elements it contains and the relationships and level of cohesion between them. The information is drawn, mainly, from the interviews with the key informants supplemented, where relevant by data from the survey

Different Perspectives

Perspectives of those interviewed on the overall state of Irish theatre are varied and frequently diametrically opposed. At one extreme there are those who are very upbeat about both what it has achieved, particularly in the last decade, and its current status.

In the last two decades, there has been a movement in favour of the theatre which is a reflection of a movement in favour of the arts generally. The arts are booming and theatre has an opportunity to exploit this boom. This contrasts with the 1970s which was a period in which the arts were seen as a luxury.

This perception of the theatre is shared by several key informants.

The strengths of the sector were most often couched in terms of the level of theatrical activity, its dynamism, vibrancy etc.

The National Theatre Society's artistic director defines the past decade as "*an exciting and challenging time*" with "*significant changes at every level*" including "*the greatest proliferation of the performing arts overseen in Ireland*". (NTS2:10)¹.

The arts, moreover, acquired a politically influential voice in this period.

There is now a political awareness of the benefit of the arts. Ireland has benefited from a world trend... Ten years ago there were no votes in the arts

Other areas of strength mentioned include the high quality of the resource base of theatrical practitioners, their commitment, improving administrative skills in the theatre, the links between different parts of the sector and the quality and diversity of the repertoire.

I Two National Theatre Society documents are quoted extensively throughout this report: Application to the Arts Council for a grant-in-aid to the National Theatre Society Ltd for Year Ending 31 December 1994, and A Statement of the Needs of the National Theatre Society Ltd, for Year Ending 31 December, 1995. For ease of referencing these will be referred to throughout the Report as NTS 1 and NTS 2

In stark contrast there is also a view that too much of current Irish theatre is about eliminating risk rather than the embracing of experimentation and innovation. There is a concern also that the artform of drama has not kept pace with other artforms nor developed in such a way as would capture the ‘modern imagination’.

An associated view is that Irish theatre is stagnant and cannot offer new opportunities. Specifically mentioned is a lack of mobility for existing creative personnel and few outlets for new, young directors.

Weaknesses cited by respondents centred on funding, audience size and profile, industry fragmentation, inadequate structures and conditions and training.

Views on strengths and weakness were not unanimous. What some regarded as an area of strength, others cited as a weakness, for example, the emphasis on new Irish writing which is preoccupied with Ireland,

On balance, however, the strengths cited were related to the artistic and internal aspects of theatrical activity while the weaknesses were largely defects in external structures of support (audiences and funding bodies, particularly the Arts Council) and issues related to sectoral cohesion and organisation.

Each of these issues will be examined in more depth in the following sections of the report. The remainder of this introduction describes the different ways in which the sector is categorised by theatre practitioners and the relationships between different elements in the sector.

The Professional Sector

A major structural dividing line in theatre is between amateur and professional activity. However, within the professional sector there are different modes of categorisation: commercial and subsidised; artistic and populist; theatre targeted at the general audience and specialist interest theatre, for example, theatre-in-education.

Commercial and/or Populist vis a vis artistic/ subvented theatre

The division between commercial and subsidised theatre is regarded by a number of those interviewed as largely an artificial and arbitrary one in practice and one which describes the nature of different kinds of productions rather than essentially different organisational forms. For example, subsidised theatre, as the name suggests, is supported by subsidies from public monies. However, subsidised companies can and, indeed, increasingly it is funding policy that they should, also have a commercial element. The Gate, for example, although subsidised by the Arts Council, relies heavily on audience numbers for income and the National Theatre Society identifies one of its tasks as that of balancing the demands of its remit with achieving a certain level of commercial success. Furthermore, the same production depending on the venue it is playing in, can be regarded both as a commercial venture and as a piece of subsidised theatre.

While some of those interviewed regard this dependence on commercial success as a constraint on producing good theatre, others hold the view that such a concern and commercial focus is a good thing. This latter group believe that a more recent concern with the marketing and PR aspect of the industry is a positive development.

There is a widespread acknowledgement that theatre with at least a certain amount of commercial focus is here to stay. There is, however, an equally widespread view that any form of theatre is difficult to sustain without some public subsidy.

Another mode of distinguishing between professional companies is by the type of theatre they produce. The distinction between 'artistic', 'real', 'creative' theatre as more valuable than 'popular', 'box-office', 'commercial' theatre is sometimes implied and is sometimes made explicit.

Irish theatre is two-tiered: populist theatre and artistic/creative theatre.

Some companies, it is argued by a number of key informants, have to mount 'box office' productions in order to survive. In some instances the distinction between 'artistic' and 'popular' theatre is associated with another way of dividing the sector i.e. into big and small companies

Populist theatre is comprised of large commercial products playing in Dublin in the bigger theatres....The artistic/creative work is being undertaken by small companies (and not all small companies) who produce good work but who are only able to attract small audiences of about 40 people.

Respondents comments about the distinction between 'artistic' and 'populist' theatre

(whatever terms are used) appear to reflect their, often differing, views on what the theatre should be.

The theatre must be commercial and entertaining rather than cultural... We sell our wares. We sell the theatre to the public like the film industry do...

The Arts Council wants to fund new plays but do not want to fund a commercially viable play. There is a stigma attached to a commercially successful play. A commercially successful play can be artistic.

The Arts Council itself has quite a different view.

The Council sees no role for itself in providing public funds for a demonstrably commercial venture which can clearly stand alone and succeed in a commercial arena. Very few producers in Ireland, or internationally, it is suggested, would reasonably expect an Arts Council to contribute public moneys to activities which are already commercially viable without subsidy.

Amateur Theatre ²

Amateur drama is wide-spread and popular throughout the country, a reality which is acknowledged by many key informants. Reasons offered for this unusual level of interest include the more frequent staging of productions which are regarded as familiar and therefore less intimidating. Local knowledge and support for amateur groups, including often, a personal connection between the member of the audience and a member of the company.

Overall, discussion of amateur theatre was limited among those interviewed, and it may be reasonable to speculate that this is a reflection of the peripheral position amateur theatre holds in the minds of the majority of professional theatre practitioners who are themselves not directly involved in the amateur theatre movement.

Those views which are expressed largely acknowledge the importance of amateur theatre and the debt owed to it by professional theatre and community theatre in terms of providing much of the expertise and know how as well as providing a training ground for a number of people who go on to become theatre professionals.

An additional positive aspect of amateur drama activity is that many argue that far from taking from the audience for professional theatre it acts as a major stimulus for interest in and knowledge of theatre, thus helping to create a following. In addition, those who are strong advocates of amateur drama argue that a good amateur dramatic society in an area will have positive implications for the development of professional theatre in terms of a well-equipped venue and an interested theatre-going audience

The amateur theatre does not take from professional audiences. Instead it develops the audience for professional theatre. Amateur practitioners are quite serious in their interest in drama so will go to see professional theatre.

As with many other issues and themes explored in the course of the interviews, this was by no means a universally held idea. A number expressed concern that the level of activity in the amateur movement did indeed provide competition for professional companies. Others view amateur theatre as a fundamentally different activity to professional theatre, defining it as essentially about personal development and as a social activity.

The need for it to be brought within the mainstream of theatre, principally through Arts Council funding is also mentioned.

The Arts Council does not provide direct funding to amateur drama societies of which there are over 1,000 in the Republic or Ireland. It holds the view that such activities are seen as leisure pursuits, and while the Council expresses a high regard for the commitment and standards achieved within the amateur movement, it takes the view that such activities currently remain outside of the Council's remit. The Council points out, however, that many amateur societies throughout Ireland have benefited from the Arts Council's investment in infrastructure. New venues, very often proposed and steered by local

2 *The areas of amateur, community and youth theatre and Theatre - in - Education will be treated in depth in "A Doing Of Life", the final section of this Review Report.*

societies, have been built with support from the Arts Council and many amateur drama societies have availed of the facilities of local arts centres, which are Arts Council funded, often at subsidised rates.

Those concerned with fostering the amateur movement identify a number of factors which are currently constraining its development: organisational weakness, lack of coherence, little or no stated policy, poor public profile; poor communication with the major potential funding body (i.e. the Arts Council); funding; quality training; venues.

Links between amateur and professional

The 'strong links' between the amateur, professional and youth elements of the sector are regarded as 'very healthy' by some of the interviewees. Concerns expressed about amateur theatre vis -a -vis professional theatre relate to the type of links between them. Many argue that these are on an individual rather than an institutional level e.g. with professionals providing services to the amateurs. There is also a view that there is inadequate support/funding including training for the amateur movement (although amateurs do now have some access to professional training in workshops) and a belief that amateur drama is isolated organisationally from the rest of the sector.

Currently the Arts Council does not have responsibility for amateur drama and this is a mistake. Amateur drama which is the source of much expertise, innovation and skill is treated like a poor relation of the arts.

Community Theatre

The Arts Council provides various supports to a number of community arts projects, including the artist-in-the-community scheme and support for CAFE, the umbrella organisation for community arts in Ireland. This includes supports in the area of community drama.

Views expressed by those interviewed in relation to community theatre are extremely varied, ranging from those who express themselves as relatively ignorant about this aspect of theatre to those who regard it as 'very good in Ireland' and who maintain that Ireland is very advanced in relation to development of community theatre compared to the UK.

In general, community theatre is regarded as a good thing. There are also those who believe that it has stagnated in recent years.

Community theatre has declined in recent years, it is a very hard slog. Community theatre is very important because it provides many people with access. The main stream theatre is expensive and still very elitist in the type of production that is put on.

Youth Theatre and Theatre-in-Education (TIE)

Only a relatively small number of those interviewed spoke in detail about the issue of TIE and Youth Theatre. In general, the view is that both aspects of theatre in Ireland are 'very strong' but with the rider that 'there is not enough of them.'

Several respondents emphasise the importance of theatre for young people, particularly of TIE, and the need to encourage children to go to the theatre and to have drama as an integral part of the curriculum as early as primary education level.

Young children should be introduced to theatre at a very young age. Theatre studies should be part of the curriculum...This would help to develop the habit of theatre-going.

Specific recommendations about the need for much greater investment in TIE were provided by one of those interviewed and these include:

- The establishment of 4 new regionally based companies to service different areas (in addition to TEAM and Graffiti);
- The introduction of a system whereby the artistic and educational quality of presentations for school children and young people be established and monitored. Those engaging in theatre for young audiences have serious responsibility to present work of the very highest standard;
- The provision of a professional children's theatre outside of the formal school environment in Ireland. Currently children's shows are very limited;
- The establishment of a full time professional theatre company for children.

It is also recommended by one of those interviewed that the responsibility for education in the theatre should rest with the Department of Education in consultation with the theatre community,

Sector Cohesion and Interaction

The issue of sector cohesion is addressed in both the survey of theatre companies and the interviews with key informants. Survey respondents had a negative view of the level of sectoral cohesion with 86% defining this as poor. Four per cent thought that was good and 6% said it was adequate. (See Appendix III, Table A1).

For key informants the issue is expressed both in terms of internal links between the different elements/levels and of structures to represent the sector vis a vis the outside world.

A current problem with the Irish theatre is that there is no coherent policy which would provide for theatres feeding into each other. What is needed is a tiered hierarchical system which would mean fewer and smaller theatres which are better subsidised, which in turn would allow them to take risks and to develop a resource base. These would feed into and provide the training ground for practitioners to develop into the bigger scale.

For others the co-existence of different types of company is a positive factor

Small theatre companies are needed because they provide the material or the avenue for the occasional brilliant newcomer. The big productions are also needed, such as are provided by the Abbey and the Gate simply because audiences want them

There is a sense among some of those interviewed that much more cooperation is needed within the industry generally and, also, between the theatre, television and film sectors.

Although lack of cohesion in the sector as a whole was seen as a serious weakness by several respondents, the cohesion within individual elements was seen as a strength.

There is a great community spirit within the small company sector. People are very helpful and obliging to one another. It is very likely that they have worked together before and will in the future. There is good cooperation between the bigger and smaller companies. The bigger ones are very helpful and will loan props and costumes. This is because many of the personnel that work in the larger companies also work in the smaller companies. Everyone knows everyone else within the theatre community.

Cohesion and representative structures - the case for a Theatre Council

A large majority of respondents in the survey (73%) agreed or agreed strongly that there was a need for an independent body to represent all interests in theatre in Ireland. Seven per cent disagreed with this and a further 3% disagreed strongly. (See Appendix III, Table A2).

Views on the need for a Theatre Council among the key informants are broad-ranging. Some of those interviewed did not mention it or, in response to a specific question, said they had not given the concept any consideration.

Of those who did say that such a Council would be a positive development, there was a huge variation in ideas about how such a body would be structured. For example, some saw it as fundamentally separate from the Arts Council while others saw it as including Arts Council representation. Other structures suggested a series of regional councils. There was also variation in ideas in relation to a Theatre Council's proposed functions and about how it would act as a uniting force and alleviate existing rivalries within the sector.

There is no united front for lobbying, for dealing with [the Arts] Council or addressing industry issues in a co-ordinated manner... There is a need for a representative organisation.

Because of the nature of the industry, with many persons having a high public profile, we have the makings of a tremendous lobby group. This group needs to pressurise governments to give more funds to the Arts Council.

Some concrete movements towards the establishment of representative body can be discerned, for example in the setting up of such organisations as the Theatre Producers' Association and the ad hoc grouping of theatre presenters.

The establishment of a Theatre Council is also seen by some as a way of dealing with what is regarded as an administrative and policy overload in the Arts Council.

A Theatre Council is needed. One man cannot deal with all aspects of theatre as is currently the case. It tends to operate as damage limitation most of the time.

Other functions of a Theatre Council mentioned were: giving a voice to the different interests on theatre including regional venues; the interests of commercial and amateur work and their interaction with the professional theatre and reviewing existing companies with a view to rationalisation.

Harnessing informal networks is a related issue which was brought up in the context of cohesion. Concern was expressed about *'the inability to harness informal networks more effectively'*. Reference was made to the bypassing of the National Association of Youth Drama (NAYD) in planning drama/theatre for the school curriculum and to the need for a formally organised network in relation to touring.

SECTION TWO

RESOURCE BASE

Quality of Human Resources

The employment structure of the theatre sector was described in Section One. The people employed in the sector constitute its human resource base.

The resource base is generally categorised into three broad classifications, as follows:

Creative / artistic

writers, directors, actors, stage and costume designers;

Technical

lighting, set construction, and other technical areas;

Administrative / Management and Business

including marketing, administrative and front-of-house staff. The position of Production Manager is a hybrid position requiring a knowledge and understanding of the creative elements of theatre together with a mix of business/commercial skills.

Categories of personnel employed

Table 2.1 shows the categories of personnel employed by the organisations surveyed. The key figure appears to be the artistic director. Almost three-quarters (71 %) of all organisations employ someone in this capacity. Next in importance is the administration/secretarial category, almost two-thirds (65%) of organisations employ some staff in this category. Fifty-eight per cent of organisations employ a general manager, 56% employ technical personnel and 54% production/stage managers. Forty per cent employ designers. As the question relates to personnel employed on an on-going capacity it is interesting to note the proportions which indicated that they employ actors (40%) and writers (28%) in this manner.

Table 2.2 shows that over half (56%) of all organisations had a full-time salaried administrator or manager. If this is an indicator of stability, it means that almost half of the organisations in the theatre sector are in a relatively precarious organisational situation. In 18% of cases, there was a full-time unsalaried administrator or organiser.

These figures provides some evidence of the scale of the hidden subsidy in the sector. This is an issue which is addressed later in this section.

*Table 2.1 Categories of Personnel Employed by The Organisation (in percentages) **

Categories	
Artistic/Director	71
General Manager	58
Box office/front of house	39
Administration/ Secretarial	65
Actors	40
Design (set, costume, lighting)	40
Technical (lighting, sound)	56
Production/Stage Management	54
Writers	28
Marketing/Public relations	43
Education/community/outreach	28

** Where the term in percentages is included as part of the table title, it indicates that categories are not mutually exclusive and may not sum to 100%*

Table 2.2 Whether full-time Administrator is employed

	Percentages
Full-time salaried Administrator/Manager	56
Full-time unsalaried Administrator/Manager	18
Other	22
Information Incomplete	4
TOTAL NUMBER	72

Employment requirements

Table 2.3 shows the percentages of organisations who require their staff in various categories to have (i) experience/on the job training and (ii) formal qualifications.

Experience/on the job training is much more frequently required than formal qualifications. It is a requisite for the employment of general managers, actors, designers, technical personnel, production staff/stage managers and marketing/public relations personnel in more than 70% of all organisations. More than two-thirds (67%) also require experience/on the job training for their artistic directors. Fewer organisations are concerned with the experience/on the job training of executive producers (50%), and education/community outreach workers (47%) while only 39% see it as a necessary attribute of writers.

On the whole, respondents were much less concerned about formal qualification and less likely to see them as prerequisites for employment. Formal qualifications in the areas of design and technical work were required by 36% and 33% of organisations, respectively. While this is significantly lower than the 71% and 78% who required experience/on the job training in the same categories, it is much higher than the 11 % and 10% who would require executive producers and writers, respectively, to have formal qualifications.

TABLE 2.3 Categories of Staff for whom (i) Experience / On-The-Job Training and (ii) Formal Qualifications are Required (in percentages)

Category of Staff	Experience/ On the job training	Formal Qualifications
General Manager	72	25
Executive Producer	50	11
Actors	71	22
Artistic Director	67	25
Design (set, costume, lighting)	71	36
Technical (lighting, sound)	78	33
Production/ Stage Management	75	19
Writers	39	10
Marketing/ Public Relations	75	35
Education/ Community/Outreach	47	25

Similarly, formal qualifications are considered to be important for general managers by only 25% of the respondents. It is beyond the scope of this study to establish whether this derives from a perception of the unsuitability of the training that is available, or a general belief that formal qualifications per se are not necessary or a lack of recognition that there are skills in this area that need to be learned. These issues will be explored in *Drama, Learning and Leisure* which will deal, inter alia, with the issue of training provision and quality.

Perceptions of standards

That the quality of the human resource base is widely regarded as a strength of the sector is shown by both the survey data and the interviews with key informants. Table 2.4 shows the attitudes of survey respondents in this regard. Perceptions of standards of the skill base in the sector were positive, particularly as far as sector specific skills like writing, directing, acting and production are concerned.

TABLE 2.4 Attitudes towards the Human Resource Base of Irish' Theatre

Attitude Item	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't know/ Incomplete Information
Current Skill-base for Theatre in Ireland					
Standards of writing in theatre	8	58	25	4	4
Standards of directing in theatre	4	56	33	3	4
Standards of acting in theatre	18	61	14	4	3
Standards of production In theatre	6	44	37	10	3
Standards of marketing in theatre	-	15	33	46	6
Standards of management in theatre	3	29	39	19	9
Standards of criticism in theatre	-	14	21	57	8
Production companies					
Standards of design & Production	8	40	32	15	4
Originality of work presented	4	36	32	24	3

TABLE 2.5 Perceptions of Adequacy of the Available National Pool)1 of Personnel)

Type	Good	Adequate	Poor	No Opinion/ Information Incomplete
General Manager	29	29	15	26
Executive Producer	18	24	17	41
Actors	50	25	3	22
Artistic/Director	33	22	18	27
Design (set, costume, lighting)	36	31	10	23
Technical (lighting, sound)	36	36	11	17
Production/ Stage Management	38	32	11	19
Writers	28	26	11	35

Marketing/ Public Relations	18	42	19	21
Education/ Community/Outreach	11	28	14	47

A similar pattern can be seen in Table 2.5 which shows perceptions of the adequacy of the available national pool of personnel in the various categories employed in the sector. The Table shows that, although some categories are regarded as better than others, there is a moderate level of satisfaction with the available national pool of personnel with rela-

lively few respondents expressing definite dissatisfaction. In interpreting this Table, however, it is important to note the relatively large proportions of respondents who did not give their opinion on the pool of personnel available.

In discussing the perceived quality and proficiency of the resource skill base in Ireland, a number of the key informants commented upon the need for those in creative and artistic areas to possess the required mix of inherent talent and acquired technique and skills.

The dominant view expressed is that there are no major lacunae in the overall skill base, and, indeed, one of the main strengths of the sector is the level of creative talent in it. Nonetheless, most agreed that there is a need to deepen and develop the skill base further through a combination of structured learning (i.e. academic and in-service training courses) and experience gained through involvement in theatrical productions. However, some concern was expressed that

...all of these new buildings and companies have not infused into the theatrical life a concomitant increase in new skilled work forces.

Outlined below are a cross-section of the views expressed in relation to the main occupational areas.

Writers

According to the Coopers & Lybrand (1994) report on 'The Employment and Economic Significance of the Cultural Industries in Ireland':

The Society of Irish Playwrights has a membership of 105 and represents the interests of Irish playwrights in Ireland. However, of these 705, very few are involved in the writing of stage plays on a full-time basis and dependent only on play writing as their sole source of income. Most playwrights are also involved in other genre of writing, such as novels, film/screen scripts etc. and some are also engaged in Writers in Residence and other writing schemes. The Society of Irish Playwrights estimates that there are very few commercially successful playwrights who concentrate primarily on stage plays and derive the main part of their income from this source. Currently there are 13 Aosdána members who are established Irish playwrights. The Arts Council estimate that in all there are perhaps less than 20 established playwrights involved in stage plays on a near full-time basis.

Standards of writing were regarded as excellent or good by two-thirds 66% of survey respondents and as poor by only 4% (Table 2.4), while more than half (54%) thought that the pool of writers in the country was good or adequate (Table 2.5). It should be noted, however, that, while only 11 % thought this was poor, a large minority (35%) offered no opinion on it.

Of all theatre practitioners, writers came in for most comment from key informants perhaps because the issue of the role and position of writers is also closely bound up with that of repertoire, particularly in the case of the National Theatre Society.

The writer is also seen as relatively privileged - both in terms of level of reward and because of tax concessions.

Overall the healthiest part of the repertoire is the amount and quality of new writing. However, there is an over-dependence on it in this country. Writers are the heroes - too much so. The reality of a production is more an outcome of collaborative effort.

The writer is the most important person but it is now time to redress the balance. There is too much emphasis on supporting new writing by the Arts Council.

The writer is growing in power—There is a need to re-balance the attention given to writers to greater equality for other practitioners, such as directors.

The repertoire is too focused on writer-based productions. Diversity and multidisciplinary arts need to be encouraged ... The Abbey places too much emphasis on new writings from established writers.. Mechanisms are not in place to develop new writers with new views.

Actors

Equity, the actors' union, has a membership of 850 actors (full members and permit holders) and 1,600 extras (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994). However, as there is significant interaction between the film and theatre sectors, many of these actors also work on film though it is generally acknowledged that there is a core of actors who concentrate solely on theatrical productions.

Apart from those actors who are employed by the National Theatre Society, all other actors are self-employed and are engaged on a project-by-project basis by the production company. As such, the level of employment will vary from actor to actor and is unpredictable.

Standards of acting were particularly positively regarded with 18% of those surveyed seeing these as excellent and a further 61 % perceiving them as good (Table 2.4). Three quarters of the respondents (75%) thought the available national pool of personnel was good or adequate (Table 2.5).

Similarly, interviewees considered that, overall, the acting base in Ireland was of a high standard, with many actors having received international recognition and acclaim. Their main concern was also the relatively small amount of work available and the consequent underemployment among actors. This concern about lack of employment opportunities and of opportunities to gain experience is not, moreover, confined to the acting profession.

One of the main strengths of the theatre is the strong pool of writers, directors, technical personnel etc. Unfortunately, these don't get sufficient opportunities to get experience.

Directors

Equity has 34 members in the 'Theatre Directors' category (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994). However, as the theatre sector is not highly unionised, this figure may under estimate the number of people engaged in directing.

Directing skills are perceived as being of a high standard: 93% of respondents think these are adequate, good or excellent and only 3% see them as poor (Table 2.4). However, only 55% think that the available national pool of artistic directors is good or adequate and a relatively high proportion (18%) think it is poor (Table 2.5).

The main issue raised in relation to the area of directing is the lack of a formal entry route, as a consequence of which experience on-the-job is crucial. While the Arts Council provides a limited number of Directing Bursaries and the National Theatre Society operates a scheme for new directors, most interviewees considered that this was insufficient. It was in this context that the suggestion that the larger theatrical companies be required to provide apprentice/trainee directing positions was made.

Producers

As noted previously, the producer is required to possess the prerequisite mix of commercial skills and an understanding and knowledge of the creative/artistic process. As there is no dedicated producers course available, producers are required to develop the necessary competences through practical experience on-the-job. For many, this can be a slow and protracted learning process.

Concern about the level of executive producer skills is expressed by key informants

The Irish theatre has a good production base in terms of stage design, staging a performance, acting; the administrative skill base is improving (aided by the new UCD Diploma course) but executive producing skills are weak overall.

Production Staff

Of the sector specific skills, standards of production are the least regarded. Six per cent consider these to be excellent and a further 44% define them as good. In all, 87% of respondents see production standards as at least adequate but 10% see them as poor (Table 2.4). This is much higher than the corresponding figure for other theatre specific skills.

Survey respondents were moderately enthusiastic about standards of design and production in production companies. Eighty per cent thought these were adequate and better but only 8% thought them excellent and 40% defined them as good (Table 2.4).

Technical Staff

Technical and design skills are positively perceived with large majorities thinking the available pool of these is adequate or good (Table 2.5).

One of the concerns expressed by key informants with regard to the more technical areas was the apparent gender imbalance.

The technical professions within the theatre sector are weighted against women. It is very difficult for women who are lighting design professionals to be accepted by their male colleagues. A minority of men in the technical area do not want be managed by women.

Another issue was the lack of formal agreements pertaining to payment rates and work practices for technical staff, particularly when touring. Some agreements or regulation in this area are necessary

Sometimes technical workers can be exploited when productions are touring and where there is no Equity agreement. There should be a standard code of practice for these workers and a clause could be built into the grant contract to ensure that workers have proper conditions. This code should include hours to be worked, rates of payment and overtime payment. This would regulate and formalise working relationships.

Administration / management / marketing

Skills which, although crucial to the sector, particularly from a commercial point of view, are not in themselves sector specific, like marketing, administration and management, are generally perceived to be of a lower standard than sector specific skills.

No survey respondent considered the standards of marketing skills to be excellent and only 15% defined them as good, while almost half of all the respondents (46%) perceived them to be poor. Fewer respondents (19%) had such a negative view of management standards. Nevertheless, only slightly less than a third (32%) thought these were excellent or good (Table 2.4).

Although standards of management and of marketing are perceived to be lower than those in sector specific skills, this is not reflected in perceptions of the adequacy of the available national pool of personnel in these categories. The numbers who see the national pool as poor are not significantly greater for these categories. This may mean that they believe that good personnel are available nationally, but that they are not working in the theatre sector (Table 2.5).

Although several of the key informants expressed satisfaction with improved levels and quality of people in arts administration, attributed in some instances to the relatively new third level Arts Administration courses in the area and the availability of staff on FAS training schemes, some concern was expressed regarding the number of new entrants moving into administration and management of theatre who do not have specific knowledge of the theatre.

Historically, the difficulty experienced by production companies in employing staff with the combination of creative and management skills is legend.

Few people have the ability to switch between creative and administrative roles..... these two functional areas cause problems when they are combined but they also cause problems when they are separated.

Criticism

Standards of the sector-related, but essentially external, skill of criticism were fairly negatively perceived. More than half of the survey respondents (57%) thought these were poor, no one thought they were excellent and only 14% defined them as good (Table 2.4).

Conditions of Work - the Hidden Subsidy

For the Arts Plan, one of the principal objectives of rationalisation of the theatre sector was the improvement of working conditions, particularly the elimination of the “hidden subsidy” of the sector by theatre practitioners. This applies especially to small companies whose members are often unpaid, on social welfare, paid on a profit-sharing basis or paid for performances but not for rehearsals.

A different problem arises when these small companies get funding from the Arts Council: they are drawn into the official economy and a large proportion of their grant is taken up by wages, PRSI contributions, administration etc. Grants are, usually, not large enough for companies to surmount these new costs. They tend, therefore, to be caught in a poverty trap and do not gain as much benefit from the funding as might be expected.

In addition, there is the effective subsidy of the sector by those employed in a temporary capacity on FÁS training schemes which provide considerable support to theatrical companies. The other issue raised in relation to PAS schemes, which are widely availed of in the theatre sector, as outlined in Section One, is that they have the effect of undermining the notion of theatre as a profession in which one can earn a decent income.

That working conditions are a major concern throughout the sector is indicated by the results of the survey which show (See Table A 3, Appendix III)¹ that 82% of respondents rank the issue of “Employment conditions including wages of theatre practitioners” as most important and all respondents agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that “Irish theatre is heavily dependent on the existence of a ‘hidden subsidy’ (i.e. theatre practitioners working for long hours for very little money), (see Appendix III, Table A.2)

Among the key informants, concern about working conditions was voiced primarily by respondents from the larger production companies and venues who consider that the proliferation of small companies has had a negative effect on working conditions, insofar as actors and other theatre professionals are eager to work and will very often do so at below union rates.

actors and actress are desperate to work. Everyone in the theatre is desperate to work and they are having, to take the ‘low equity minimum’, and that’s just not on. I think that if a company is in receipt of Arts Council funds, the Arts Council has the responsibility to ensure that those funds can at least pay people. We are talking about worsening conditions. This is one of the most shocking things that has happened in the last ten years.

It’s not the management’s fault because they have so little money and I can’t blame the actors for taking the work.

¹ Table A.3, Appendix III shows the response to a question asking that a list of items be scaled from 5 to 1 (most important = 5). Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the items would be the two most important priorities for funding. (See Table 3.1, Section Three)

The view was expressed that the situation has deteriorated within the past decade.

In the sixties and seventies, if you were in professional theatre, you got at least the equity minimum. This is no longer the case.

Some frustration was expressed at the lack of appreciation of the costs involved in running a professional theatre.

The theatre is a very expensive business....that is if people are to be paid a living wage.

The hidden subsidy in theatre is huge and a massive problem. I would like to see the rate of tax on theatre work limited to the standard rate as some kind of incentive for actors to forego film work for theatre work.

The amateur drama scene was attributed by some to helping to blur the issue.

With this tremendous enthusiasm for amateur theatre, some people start to question why some should be paid for what others do for nothing. That kind of mind set is never far from the surface and it hasn't really shifted much. I think that is something that undermines a lot of our efforts.

The current competition for talent from the film industry, which is in a better position to offer union rates and conditions, was also commented upon as a more recent phenomenon which was further exacerbating the situation.

The biggest threat to the theatre is film because both draw on the same pool of talent. Irish actors are particularly well-placed to work in film because of the English language. Theatre cannot compete with the financial rewards offered by film, although the actors often develop their skills in theatre. In this way, theatre subsidises film in a way it cannot afford.

The question of wages/working conditions also comes up in the context of touring: smaller venues cannot afford to pay the rates demanded by the larger companies. But there is a view that actors of such companies are entitled to a decent income and to proper per diem allowances when they are on tour.

No potential solutions were put forward to resolve the current situation though some feel strongly that there should be greater unionisation of the profession.

There is a need for greater unionisation to protect the rights of staff and freelance personnel.

In this context, it should be noted that little more than half of the organisations surveyed (51%) had no relationship with Equity and, while 24% said that their staff policy was guided by Equity guidelines, only 19% of the total had a formal and ongoing relationship with it. Forty-three per cent had some relationship with Equity while 40% of organisations reported employing actors in an ongoing capacity. (Table 2.6)

Some practitioners were of the view that the Arts Council should concern themselves more with the issue of low pay and poor working conditions.

There should be proper wages for theatre practitioners with the Arts Council seen to support industry paying proper wages. The Arts Council is aware of the hidden subsidy but doesn't want any grant increase to disappear into this black hole.

The Council should give more money to the professional theatre. This would help employment. The amateur and professional balance in Irish theatre needs to be considered and the balance worked out. Amateur theatre is excellent but it does not provide employment.

The employment provided by the commercial sector is very important both financially and for the retention and development of talent within the theatre community.

TABLE 2.6 Type of Relationship with Equity

Type	Percentages
No Relationship	51
Formal and ongoing	19
Staff policy guided by Equity guidelines	24
Other	6
TOTAL NUMBER	72

Training

Current provision of training by organisations in the sector

Almost three quarters (74%) of the organisations surveyed provided some kind of training for their staff. Details of what training was provided for which categories of staff are provided in Table 2.7 below.

TABLE 2.7 Nature of Training provided

Type	Mngmt/Admin.	Artistic/Tech.
	Personnel	Personnel
	%	%
In-house, On the Job	19	19
In-house structured programmes	-	4
In-house, On the Job +		
In house/structured programmes	8	11
In house + employee's fee	36	32
Employee's fee paid for external course	3	1
Other/Any Other Combination	3	3
No training provided by organisation/Incomplete Information	31	30
TOTAL NUMBER	72	72

Sixty-six per cent of all organisations provided some training for artistic/personnel. A majority of these (66% of the total) provided at least some of this training in-house: 19% provided in-house on the job training only, 4% provided in-house structured programmes only and 11 % provided a combination of these. Very few organisations (1 %) confined their training activity to paying fees for external courses for employees but 32% did combine this with in-house training of one kind or another.

Roughly the same proportion (69%) provided some training for managerial/administrative personnel. Twenty-seven per cent provided only in-house training - either on the job or in structured programmes. A further 36% combined in-house training with payment of employees' fees for external courses. Three per cent confined training activity to payment of external fees for managerial/administrative staff compared to the 1 % who did this for artistic/technical staff.

A high proportion of respondents (36%) said they provided training for people who were external to the organisation compared to 64% who said they did not (Table 2.8).

Although training is seen as an important requirement by a large proportion of respondents, only 1 % would consider it as a first priority for funding. However, a much larger

proportion (11 %) gave it as their second priority. This is a significant proportion, particularly when the lack of consensus on funding priorities is taken into account. (See Section Three, Table 3.1)

TABLE 2.8 Provision of Training Courses to External Users by Organisation

Training Provided	Percentages
Yes	36
No	64
TOTAL NUMBER	72

In relation to the area of training and human resource development, there is a perceived need for training to improve the sector and to protect its resource base. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents see it as either important or very important (See Appendix III, Table A.3).

Among key informants, there is a general consensus that a combination of formal academic training, on-the-job experience and structured in-service training programmes are required as a means of developing the resource base in a structured manner. Currently, a certain level of training occurs in an ad hoc and uncoordinated fashion, but the view is that a cohesive pan-industry national training strategy is now required.

A small number of interviewees noted their views that certain creative skills cannot be taught.

Directing, writing and acting cannot be taught. These are gifts and not crafts. There is a place for small scale workshops or courses however.

For acting you need talent, you need to have a good body and a good voice and a musical ear but, having said that, you need to train. There is no point in training, however, if you haven't got those things but they are not enough. The same applies to writers, directors, designers.

Therefore, while inherent talent is crucial, technique and development of that talent can be progressed through structured training programmes.

For emerging practitioners, there are the Gaiety Schools of Acting and the two year programme in TCD (which has links with the National Theatre Society). Administration training needs are catered for by UCD and UCG. The National Theatre Society has its own training remit and programme which concentrates on acting technique, directing and the nurturing of playwrights.

Some practitioners pursue training courses in Britain and in some instances choose to stay and pursue a career there.

The main occupational areas where training and development are considered necessary by key informants are:

Directing

particularly for new entrants who may/or may not have come through the university system. It was also considered that directors need training in dealing with people and in theatre practice, but that this could best be undertaken as modular training in mid-career;

Acting

while there are a number of well-established acting courses, a view was expressed that such courses need to integrate more with the industry itself with different forms of theatre being taught. The whole area of voice training was considered wanting.

Current courses are too academic and traditional with the emphasis on the classical school. They need to open up more and should be at the leading edge of acting.

Because of limited career prospects in this country, it was suggested that acting schools should collaborate more to bring British acting agencies to this country to see student shows as a means of obtaining acting opportunities there.

Some criticism was made of the current training provision in acting.

There is a large number of actors from the various colleges coming into an already over supplied market. Because there is not enough work for everyone, the colleges overtrain their students and they coach them in how to behave at auditions. This gives rise to a very standard and right way to act. This inevitably leads to a very skilled proficient group of young actors but all are trained and behave in a very conservative manner. Interaction between students and practitioners with outside European influence would give the students confidence in their own ability and allow them to develop their style..... If they start to produce lots of little products of the schools there is a problem with the training. Craft is important but there are many different ways to be artistic. Training should be very flexible and experiential and not just follow one particular formal route. Exchange programmes could also be developed between European schools. Students could spend some time in the different colleges.

Technical skills

It was felt that technicians now need to be flexible and capable of working on theatre productions, on Arts Centres and possibly on film or video productions as well. Regional Technical Colleges were suggested as potentially suitable educational bodies for the training of technical skills.

Venue management

Specific in-service training for venue managers was also commented upon.

There is a need to encourage venue managers to understand their audience. In Britain there was a programme for teachers on theatre given by professionals. Something similar is needed for venue managers. They need to develop confidence about theatre in order to enter into dialogue with production companies...

Another suggestion for developing venue managers is the organisation of a 'fair' of production companies where promoters could come and view for the day. The occasion could be combined with a marketing workshop thus providing some form of training.

In the context of formulating a national training strategy for theatre, it was suggested that due consideration be given to reviewing the role of the National Theatre Society in relation to its training remit.

The very significant role of FÁS was also noted, however, more in terms of its financial subvention of employment than as a leading actor in the training arena.

The role of FAS in indirectly subventing the arts should be formally recognised. It provides more funds for the arts in Cork than the Arts Council.

Other views and suggestions expressed on the issue of training included the following: consideration of a 'Conservatory of Theatre' in Ireland; establishment of an 'American style system of internships'; and the establishment of a 'theatre centre' to link with the colleges so that practitioners and students could meet and work together, were suggested as warranting further consideration. One general opinion was;

Where there is training, it needs to be done well and there needs to be a balance between active apprenticeship and taught programmes. In this regard, Equity rules, which makes getting a card conditional on doing a certain number of weeks work, are commended.

Lastly, it was suggested that some consideration should be given to investment in relation to 'training the trainers'.

In conclusion, therefore, there is a consensus amongst theatre practitioners that training and resource development in all the key areas is needed and requires to be approached in a more focused and cohesive manner than is currently the case. In this regard, a national training strategy was suggested. Such a strategy should comprise an appropriate mix of training courses, practical experience and in-service training modules. In terms of advancing such an initiative further, it was suggested that the Arts Council should take the lead but working in close collaboration with the industry itself and the current providers of training programmes for the sector.

Infrastructure

Attitudes towards the quality and accessibility of theatre spaces are shown in Table 2.9 The quality of physical spaces in Dublin was seen as adequate or better by a majority of respondents (56%) while 68% thought this of physical spaces outside Dublin. There were major differences, however, in attitudes towards the accessibility/availability of physical spaces to production companies. Three quarters (75%) of respondents defined this as adequate or better in relation to spaces outside Dublin compared to 22% who would so define accessibility/availability of physical space in Dublin. More than half (56%) thought this was poor while 22% did not give any opinion.

Capital investment in infrastructure was ranked as of the first or second importance by 61 % of all respondents (Table A3, Appendix III). Seven per cent gave this as their first funding priority and 6% as their second priority (See Section Three, Table 3.1).

Among the key informants, the question of infrastructure is closely related to that of geographical access. There is little sense of a shortage of theatre space. On the contrary, several interviewees believe that there are too many spaces available in relation to the size of the theatre-going public. Moreover, in the view of one respondent, the changing nature of production companies means that a fully dedicated theatre space is not always essential for a production and there is no need to have a theatre space in every town. Another respondent was emphatic that what was needed was fewer - and smaller - theatres.

Support for investment in infrastructure was, on the whole, lukewarm.

Historically, too much money has been put into buildings... I would prefer money to go into productions rather than venues.

For the National Theatre Society, however, infrastructure is a major issue, with the Society's building being cited as one of the two major liabilities the company has to deal with. This is dealt with further in Section Seven.

TABLE 2.9 Attitudes towards the Physical Resource Base of Irish Theatre

Attitude Item	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't know/ Incomplete Information
Venues					
Quality of physical spaces in Dublin	1	26	29	36	7
Quality of physical spaces outside Dublin	3	26	39	26	6
Accessibility/availability of spaces in Dublin to production companies.	-	3	19	56	22
Accessibility/availability of spaces out-side Dublin to production companies	5	35	35	14	11

SECTION THREE

FUNDING

The financial base of the sector, including the level and extent of public funding, has been described in detail in Section One. This section deals with funding and related issues as these are perceived by theatre practitioners.

Importance of Funding as an Issue

Funding is a crucial issue for both survey respondents and key informants. Of the former, 62% agreed with the strongly worded statement that 'Any problems in Irish Theatre are primarily caused by inadequate funding' (See Appendix III, Table A2).

For key informants, the question of funding - levels, distribution (criteria, transparency of procedures) cuts across all other issues. There is an urgent sense of companies struggling to survive with inadequate resources.

The issue of funding appears to colour people's perceptions of issues like regional access to the theatre, touring, the role and remit of the National Theatre Society. One respondent even related it to the current state of the repertoire in the sense that the necessity of getting funding predisposes companies to produce work which they believe will win the approval of the Arts Council.

Level of Funding

The overall level of funding is seen as being too low. The plateau of circa £5.5 million is criticised by key informants as is the inclusion of the National Theatre Society in theatre subsidy statistics. This is regarded as distorting the actual state of affairs, a view expressed by the Cork Arts Development Committee (CADC) recently

The concept of plateau funding is essentially pernicious in that it leads either to frustration for the poorly-funded or complacency for the rich few. The financial analysis of theatre's share of the Arts Council's budget is faulty because it includes the National Theatre Society in the theatre budget and the NCH and IMMA are not in their respective sectors. This seriously distorts the funding analysis of theatre vis a vis music and the visual arts.

(CADC, Public Meeting, 5 June, 1995).

It is argued that one major negative effect of the overall level of funding is that no organisation is attracting a sufficient amount and all are, thus, unable to 'pursue excellence'.

The current levels of support are just keeping us alive but we are unable to exploit the 'boom' in the arts

Regional balance

The question of funding is closely related to that of regional access. Opinions on this issue are divided. For example, while 78% of survey respondents agreed or agreed strongly that there was too small a proportion of professional companies compared with amateur companies available to audiences outside Dublin, 72% agreed or agreed strongly that the criteria for allocating funding was too overtly determined by geographic location.

(See Appendix III, Table A2).

The relative funding positions of Dublin and the regions was mentioned by almost all key informants and is also discussed in documentary sources. The views expressed were sometimes diametrically opposed.

There is widespread perception in the arts world that there is an imbalance of funding between the capital and the regions despite the efforts of the Arts Council to address this issue. At best two-thirds of the funding and at worst three-quarters goes to one-third of the people in the capital. This imbalance can only be addressed through positive discrimination towards the regions allied to growth in the Arts Council's budget. In this context, it must be pointed out that Dublin's economy profits considerably from the national arts institutions sited in the capital, primarily through the spin-off provided by tourism. Further increases in funding to arts bodies in Dublin should be seen through Dublin Corporation's implementation of the Arts Plan.

(CADC, A Report to the Arts Council, 1994)

Dublin is losing out overall in terms of access to funding.

Dublin based companies will argue for 'excellence and efficiency', regional companies for 'equity and identity'. Seventy per cent of the funding is allocated to Dublin-based venues and companies with the remaining 30% given to the regions.

In addition, some of those interviewed were critical of the proportion of the available funding which was allocated to the National Theatre Society and to the Gate.

While some of those interviewed agree with the emphasis on regional access, and therefore a perceived positive bias towards funding of companies and venues outside Dublin, which is an important aspect of Arts Council policy, this policy is also a cause of some dissent.

Theatres need to be properly indigenous, although they do not necessarily need for the personnel to be from the local area. However, current funding bias towards the regions encourages companies from Dublin to transpose themselves to a regional area.

Location should not be a criterion for (funding) a theatre space or company.

The difficulty Dublin companies experience in getting funds is a point on which there is some (transregional) consensus

Current Arts Council policy favours the regions. It is impossible for new Dublin companies to obtain Arts Council assistance so Dublin-based talent cannot emerge.

It is difficult for new production companies (particularly in Dublin) to come on stream, i.e. to obtain Arts Council funding.

This last point and the Arts Councils response to it is raised in the next sub-section dealing with proliferation and rationalisation.

One interviewee did express the view that, while the funding climate was difficult for Dublin companies, it did have one positive outcome in that it promoted healthy competition which resulted in an upgrading of standards.

Level of support to the National Theatre Society

The question of funding for the National Theatre Society is discussed in detail in Section Seven. The Society itself is extremely dissatisfied with its level of funding. The dominant theme of interviewees' criticisms of the Society in relation to its funding refers, not to its level of funding, but to what it does with it, particularly in relation to touring, although reference to training was also mentioned. A small number of those interviewed did, however, believe that the Society was 'getting too much of a limited cake', and one believed that the level of subvention allowed the Society an unfair advantage in competing for the best human resources.

Proliferation and Rationalisation

Another issue closely related to that of funding is that of ‘rationalising’ the number of companies operating in the country. This, in turn, is related to recent increases in the number of companies.

Within the past ten years the number of professional theatrical production companies has increased as has the number of venues, suitable for theatrical performances. Using the Arts Council client base as an indicator, it can be seen that while there were just 12 revenue - funded clients in 1985, there are 30 in 1995.

Survey respondents were not asked about the proliferation of theatre activity per se but, for most of the key informants, this was viewed as indicative of a healthy level of activity in the sector, though several commented upon the variation in the quality of productions

The quality is polarised, some are excellent and some dreadful.

Survey respondents were asked whether there should be fewer production companies receiving a more substantive share of the available funding based on clear and transparent criteria. Opinion of this was divided. Forty-one per cent agreed or agreed strongly with this and 59% disagreed or disagreed strongly. (See Appendix III, Table A2).

Among key informants, on the other hand, there was widespread agreement with the idea of rationalisation. Significant concern was expressed by most interviewees regarding the sustainability and development of theatre in Ireland, specifically in the context of the current funding environment and the absence of significantly increased audience numbers.

Concerns in this regard centred around the following expressed issues:

- the increasing numbers of production companies and theatrical venues are competing for a relatively fixed pool of funding, as a consequence of which significant rivalry and competition exists;
- the relatively low level of income (box office receipts and revenue grants) which forced many companies into a poverty trap whereby staff were paid below the average industrial wage level, and the organisation had insufficient funds to realise its full creative potential.
- the Arts Council’s funding policy appears to favour the continued support of existing clients which results in newly established production companies, particularly those in the Dublin region, experiencing significant difficulties in being accepted as clients.

In relation to this last point, the Council has continued to support its long-standing clients (75% of companies supported in 1985 still receive grant-aid) but also took on new revenue clients at an average rate of 2 per annum between 1985 and 1984. (18 clients in 9 years).

In 1995, of 9 revenue clients which had been taken on since 1990, 6 were from outside Dublin and 3 were Dublin-based. However, it can also be noted that 12 Dublin companies, formed since 1990, remain outside the revenue funding net, whereas no regional company does so.

As a result of the generally perceived under-funded nature of the sector, most interviewees were clear-cut in their assertion that rationalisation of the sector is necessary and that it would have long-term beneficial effects. In this regard, rationalisation is seen, essentially, in terms of reducing the number of production companies operating within the country.

In line with their overall divided attitude to rationalisation, just half (50%) of survey respondents rank support for emerging new companies as either important or very important (see Appendix III, Table A3), only 1 % would make it their first priority in funding and 8% would make it their second priority (see Table 3.1).

Key informants see rationalisation as having several objectives, for example:

- in the Arts Plan, it is put forward as a means of consolidating funding levels for a core number of companies in Dublin and of ending the hidden subsidising of the sector by professionals working for below average wage levels;
- the increased level of funding that rationalisation would mean for some companies would, it is believed, allow the sector to develop, by giving companies enough funding and leeway to experiment, and
- rationalisation is inevitable if new talent is to emerge.

The responsibility for bringing about a rationalisation of the sector was generally considered to be that of the Arts Council. This is dealt with in the following sub-section.

In summary, rationalisation of the theatre sector is favoured by a number of theatre practitioners as a means of enabling quality production companies and talent to emerge and develop, and there is a general consensus among key informants that the criteria to be applied should be those of excellence. The actual implementation of such a rationalisation programme would undoubtedly cause significant controversy, resulting in considerable fall-out and an overall reduction in the number of production companies in operation. Such a course of action would have implications for other policy decisions vis a vis regional access, geographic distribution, the National Theatre Society etc.

Arts Council Policy and Practice on Funding

Perceptions of the role and operation of the Arts Council are closely bound up with funding since it is the Arts Council that dispenses most of the funds available and, conversely, the allocation of funds is one of the Arts Council's main functions.

In determining its funding policy, the Arts Council faces the challenge of maintaining a balance between the different aspects of its remit, in particular the balance between promoting excellence while at the same time providing encouragement to the growth of receptive audiences and increased access to, and participation in, the arts right across the country, in rural areas just as much as in large cities, to all social strata and all ages. (The Public and The Arts, 1994)

The results of the survey and the comments recorded in the interviews identify a number of criticisms of the Council's record in relation to funding.

With regard to funding policy, 70% of survey respondents thought the level of clarity was poor and only 27% regarded it as adequate or good. A higher, but still relatively low proportion (35%) expressed some satisfaction with the appropriateness of this policy. (See Appendix III, Table A1).

There was virtual unanimity among survey respondents (91 %) in their agreement that the Arts Council criteria for funding to theatre/drama are unclear and/or inadequate. (See Appendix III, Table A2).

Key informants voice similar concerns in relation to policy on funding. These include a perception of a lack of transparency in the funding criteria/decision making process.

Funding criteria need to be established. They are currently vague

People need to know the Arts Council's criteria in relation to funding and in particular they need to know why they were refused.

There is also a perception that the available funds are spread too thinly and that existing clients are favoured over the new and untried. This is despite the existence of the Theatre Projects awards which are focussed on the new, untried and experimental. The funding bias, it is believed is towards conservatism and a lack of support for innovation and experimentation

Energy is five years in length for a new company—by the time a company gets money its creative energy is on the wane.

There is a concern that the competition among so many companies for so little funding in the context of an unclear set of criteria breeds an undesirable level of rivalry in the industry

The huge rivalry for existing funds mitigates against industry cohesion

A fourth criticism is that currently Arts Council funding is too trapped and categorised too

much while one interviewee argued that funding needs to be pegged to some additional project or goal, and that decisions about funding should be more results driven. This view accords with the general view that weak companies should not continue to be funded.

The Council's structures for undertaking assessments for funding purposes are also criticised. First, it is believed by some that allocations should be decided only by those who have a particular competence in relation to theatre, and that

the full Arts Council should not under any circumstances sit when making the annual grant allocations for drama

Second, an aspect of Arts Council funding practice that came in for some criticism was that funding was provided on a year to year basis. A longer span - perhaps of three years - was seen to be preferable

Such theatres and companies which are funded need to be funded properly and allowed a period to either prove or disprove themselves.

A one year plan is no good and it would be much better if companies got funding for a number of years. They could plan their program and they could be fairly evaluated. ... If you could plan for three shows you could use the funding more efficiently.

In regard to rationalisation, it was suggested that the Council

should be more ruthless in pulling the plug on consistently weak companies.

Many of those interviewed expressed the view that the Council now needs to critically review its existing client portfolio with a view to rationalisation, and that there is a need for guidelines to be developed and assessment criteria to be established in this regard and communicated to clients and prospective clients. However, as was noted earlier, while those interviewed were in favour of rationalisation, this view is not as strongly held by those surveyed.

A range of evaluation criteria were suggested by some interviewees in respect of the assessment process, including, innovation - the number of artistic risks and new works; audience attendances; creative ability and artistic merit; production values. A number of interviewees were adamant that such issues as geographic criteria and political factors should not be taken into consideration, neither should the Arts Council follow what is termed 'clientelist' criteria.

TABLE 3.1 Views on First and Second Priorities for Funding in Irish Theatre (in percentages)

Views

	First Priority	Second Priority
Innovative and experimental forms in the Theatre (including the work of new directors)	17	11
Touring of professional Irish theatre productions in Ireland	14	7
Touring of professional Irish theatre production abroad	-	1
The work of new emerging writers	4	4
Emerging new professional companies	1	8
Sustaining the work of the National Theatre Society	3	-
Consolidation of the work of established companies with a proven track record	17	1
Companies and productions dedicated to specialised interests; e.g. women, disabled; youth; Irish Language	4	4
Festivals presenting International and Irish work	-	1
Employment conditions, including wages of theatre practitioners	14	11
Training of theatre practitioners	1	11
Audience development and marketing	6	14
Amateur theatre	1	1
Community theatre	4	4
Theatre for young people/ children	6	8
Theatre - in -Education	-	4
Capital investment in infrastructure	7	6
Foreign companies touring Ireland	-	-
Information incomplete	1	2

Funding Priorities

Respondents were asked to select from the list of items in Table A3, Appendix III the two they considered to be the most important priorities for funding in addition to evaluating their degree of importance. The results are shown in Table 3.1.

Views on funding priorities were found to vary widely. There is little consensus on what these priorities should be. The highest level of agreement is 17% and there is an even wider distribution for second priorities, reflecting, perhaps, the broad range of intra-sectoral interests.

Consolidation of the work of established companies is chosen as the first priority by 17% of all respondents. An additional 14% chose employment conditions, including wages of theatre practitioners.

Seventeen per cent chose innovative and experimental work, including the work of new directors but only 4% chose the work of new emerging writers and 1 % emerging new professional groups.

Three per cent chose sustaining the work of the National Theatre Society.

Touring of professional Irish theatre was chosen by 14% of respondents as their first priority for funding but no one chose touring of professional Irish theatre productions abroad, foreign companies touring Ireland or festivals presenting international and Irish work.

Although audience development and marketing is seen as of the highest importance for the sector, only 6% would regard this as their first funding priority.

A similar situation pertains to theatre for young people/children and Theatre in Education. Both of these are regarded as important but only 6% of all respondents chose funding for young people/children as their first priority and no one chose theatre in education. Four per cent chose companies and productions dedicated to specialised interests.

This pattern of funding priorities varies a little when second priorities are considered. Although the concern about working conditions remains high (11 %), consolidation of the work of established companies is the second priority of only 1 % of all respondents.

The biggest proportion (14%) opt for audience development as their second funding priority.

Emerging new companies move from a support level of 1 % for first funding priorities to 8% for second funding priorities. Similarly theatre for young people/children and Theatre in Education get a higher level of support, 8% and 4% respectively and training moves from 1% to 11%.

Amateur and community theatre remain low and no one chose sustaining the National theatre Society as his/her second funding priority.

SECTION FOUR

REPERTOIRE

A total of 49 production companies provided information on their companies' repertoire, i.e. productions originating within the Republic of Ireland. Over the period 1990 to 1994 inclusive, information was provided on 522 productions¹ in total. (See Appendix IV for complete listing of these productions). A total of 234 of these Irish produced plays toured to a number of additional locations, both throughout the country and abroad, ranging from one to over one hundred locations.

In addition, information was collected from 27 receiving venues on productions which originated outside the Republic of Ireland and these were found to number 214 in total. (Note: The quality and completeness of the information that venues were able to supply on these productions was very variable and consequently it was not regarded as useful to list them in database form).

In summary, information was received on a total of 736 productions which were staged at least once in the Republic of Ireland during the period between 1990 and 1995, of which 70% originated within Ireland and 30% outside.

Type of production

Overwhelmingly the productions can be seen to be the work of 20th century writers (83% of those originating within the Republic of Ireland and 75% from outside Ireland). A sizeable proportion are productions which had never previously been staged (46% and 43% respectively). New work of established writers is the most frequent form of new work with 31% of productions originating within the Republic of Ireland and 29% of productions originating outside the Republic of Ireland being of this kind.

TABLE 4.1 Type of Production (a)

Type	Republic of Ireland	Outside the Republic of Ireland
	%	%
New Writer (i.e. previously unstaged)	15	14
New Work of established writer (1st Staging)	31	29
Other 20th Century work	37	32
Pre 20th Century work	12	10
Incomplete Information	5	15
TOTAL NUMBER	522	214

1. This figure excludes any revivals of these productions within that period.

Table 4.2 shows that almost two-thirds (63%) of the Republic of Ireland originated repertoire is by Irish writers, most of whom wrote original work in the English language, compared with 26% of the work originating outside the Republic of Ireland. As would be expected 42% of the latter work is written by non-Irish writers in the English language or translations of other foreign language work.

TABLE 4.2 Type of Production (b)

Type	Republic of Ireland	Outside the Republic of Ireland
	%	%
Irish Writer in English Language	60	26
Irish Writer in Irish Language	3	-
Non-Irish Writer in English Language	25	42
New translation by Irish Writer of foreign language work	3	3
Other translation of foreign language work	4	9
Incomplete Information/N.A./ devised	5	19
TOTAL NUMBER	522	214

A relatively small proportion of the repertoire is intended for young people/children, 23% of the Republic of Ireland originated work and just 13% of work from outside the Republic of Ireland.

Table 4.3 Type of Production (c)

Type	Republic of Ireland	Outside the Republic of Ireland
	%	%
Intended for young people/children	15	9
Theatre-in-education	8	4
NA/Not intended for young people	77	87
TOTAL NUMBER	522	214

An examination of the data base of the 522 productions originating within the Republic of Ireland (see Appendix IV) shows that there were only a very small number of cases in which the repertoire was repeated even once by professional companies within the five year period. Seventeen were produced twice, and a further six three times or more. As can be seen from the list of these productions, three were Shakespearean productions, probably aimed at second-level students

Figure 4.1 **Productions Staged Three Times or More**

Macbeth	William Shakespeare	5
Othello	William Shakespeare	4
Romeo and Juliet	William Shakespeare	3
Translations	Brian Friel	3
Philadelphia, Here I Come	Brian Friel	3
The Shadow of a Gunman	Sean O Casey	3

Further analysis of the repertoire of 522 productions shows that 210 of these productions were by writers who had only one work staged in this period. Thirty had work staged twice, a further ten three times and nine, four times. Just 15 writers had work staged between five and nine times. Finally 5 writers had more than ten productions, accounting for 69 productions (13%). These writers were William Shakespeare, Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan (Joint authors), Samuel Beckett, Brian Friel and Tom Murphy.

A further 25 productions were devised pieces.

Figure 4.1 **Number of Productions originating in the Republic of Iceland staged by Writers in the period 1990-1994**

Number of productions	Number of writers	Percentage of productions
1	210	40
2	30	11
3	10	6
4	9	7
5	5	5
6	6	7
7-9	4	6
More than 10	5	13
25	Devised Pieces	5

A total of forty-two directors directed 311 of the 522 productions, while just nine directed more than 10 productions each.

Figure 4.3 **Number of directors responsible for more than two productions originating in the Republic of Ireland in the period 1990 -1994**

Number of productions	Number of directors
3	6
4	6
5	8
6	2
7-10	11
More than 10	9

Gender of Writers and Directors

The writers of the Republic of Ireland produced plays are overwhelmingly male (80%) compared with the just 15% of productions which are plays written by women.

Work originating outside the Republic of Ireland is also written predominantly by men, at least 64% of productions. This can be compared with the 13% of productions which are plays written by women.

A similar pattern is revealed when the gender of directors is examined. Three-quarters of the Republic of Ireland originated productions (75%) are directed by men compared with just close to-one-quarter by women (24%).

For the 214 productions from outside the Republic of Ireland the imbalance is not quite as marked. Information was either incomplete or not applicable for 37 % of the productions, however 47% are reported as having been directed by men compared with just 16% by women.

TABLE 4.4 Gender of Writers and Oirectore

Gender	Republic of Ireland		Outside the Republic of Ireland	
	<i>Percentages</i>		<i>Percentages</i>	
	Writer	Director	Writer	Director
Male	80	75	64	47
Female	15	24	13	16
Incomplete information	5	1	23	37
TOTAL NUMBER	522	522	214	214

Size of productions

Information on size of productions was collected in relation to the Republic of Ireland originated work only. Less than one-quarter of all productions have more than 10 members in the cast and only 2% have more than 50.

In addition, just less than half (46%) had ten or less of other people who were directly involved in the production, while 52% had between eleven and fifty.

TABLE 4.5 Number of Persons involved in productions Originating in the Republic of Ireland

Number	Cast	Others Directly Involved
	%	%
10 or less	75	46
11-50	22	52
More than 50	2	1
Incomplete information	1	1
TOTAL NUMBER	522	522

Number and Distribution of Productions

Over the five year period on which information was collected, it can be seen that there is a discernible rising trend in numbers of productions.

Seventeen per cent of the total number of the Republic of Ireland originated productions were produced in 1990, with this percentage rising steadily to 24% in 1994. Similarly, 28% of the total number of productions originating outside the Republic of Ireland were produced in 1994, compared with 12% in 1990.

TABLE 4.6 Year of First Staging of Production

Year	Republic of Ireland	Outside the Republic of Ireland
	Percentages	Percentages
1994	24	28
1993	22	25
1992	19	21
1991	17	12
1990	17	12
Incomplete Information	-	1
TOTAL NUMBER	522	214

More than three-quarters (80%) of all visiting productions came from Britain and Northern Ireland. Twenty-four per cent from N. Ireland alone and 56% from England, Scotland and Wales.

TABLE 4.7 Country Where Production Originated

Country	Percentages
Northern Ireland	24
England, Scotland, Wales	56
Other European	5
United States of America	7
Other	4
Incomplete Information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	214

The majority (58%) of the Republic of Ireland originated productions were first staged in Dublin, and a further 2% in the rest of Leinster. The remainder were distributed between the two other regions with 17% in Munster and 18% in Connacht/Ulster.

TABLE 4.8 Location of First Staging of Productions Originating in the Republic of Ireland

Location	Percentages
Dublin	58
Rest of Leinster	2
Minister	17
Connacht/Ulster	18
Other/Outside Country	4
TOTAL NUMBER	522

Seating Capacity, Seating take-up

The majority of productions (58%) are first staged in small venues with a seating capacity of 250 or less, and a further 24% in venues with a seating capacity of between 250 and 550. Just 10% of productions are first staged in venues with a seating capacity of more than 550. (note: Information on the seating capacity, seating take-up, length of productions runs and financial outcome of productions was collected on the Republic of Ireland-originated work only.)

Less than one-quarter (24%) of productions are reported as having 50% or less of seating take-up. Thirty per cent of productions are reported as attracting between 50% and 75% of seating take-up while 40% are reported as achieving a take-up of more than 75%.

TABLE 4.9 Seating Capacity of First Staging of Productions Originating in the Republic of Ireland

Seating Capacity	Percentages
150 or less	34
151-250	24
251-550	24
More than 550	10
Not applicable (outdoor venue)	5
Incomplete information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	522

TABLE 4.10 Percentage of Seat take-up of Productions Originating in the Republic of Ireland

Percentage Take-Up	Percentages
50 or less	24
51-75	30
More than 75	40
Not Applicable	3
Incomplete Information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	522

Length of Production Runs.

More than half of all productions run for just one month or less (57%) while a further one-quarter (24%) run for a period of two months. It should be noted that this figure excludes touring which is described in Section Five.

TABLE 4.11 Length of Runs of Productions Originating in the Republic of Ireland

Length	Percentages
Two weeks or less	17
1 month	40
2 months	24
3 months	8
More than 3 months	5
Incomplete information	6
TOTAL NUMBER	522

Financial Outcome of Productions

Just half of productions achieved break-even (31%) or made a profit (19%), despite the relatively high attendance levels reported.

TABLE 4.12 Financial Outcome of Productions Originating in (no Republic of Ireland)

Outcome	Percentages
Made a profit	19
Achieved Break-even	31
Made a loss	49
Incomplete information	1
TOTAL NUMBER	522

Attitudes and Views on the Repertoire

Some of the key informants cite the repertoire as one of the current strengths of the sector.

The repertoire is good and diverse. Non-narrative - more performance related - styles are being developed. The definition of theatre is changing all the time.

There was some disagreement as to what the best part of the repertoire was:

Overall the healthiest part of the repertoire is the amount and quality of new writing. However, there is an over dependence on it in this country. Writers are the heroes - too much so. The reality of a production is more an outcome of collaborative effort...

The writer is the most important person but it is now time to redress the balance. There is too much emphasis on supporting new writing by the Arts Council.

The writer is growing in power, the 'new play' is the thing. The existing repertoire is being ignored, including European theatre and theatre which is not text-based. It has now become a question of political correctness i.e. it is okay if it is a new play but not if it's a classic. There is pressure to do new plays regardless of the quality.

The repertoire is too focused on writer-based productions. Diversity -multidisciplinary arts - need to be encouraged. Productions also need to be more innovative. Limited themes are used over and over again. The Abbey places too much emphasis on new writings from established writers, searching for permanency. Plays should only be for a time. Current lives are not represented on stage. Neither are there mechanisms in place to develop new writers with new views. New forms of non text-based media need to be developed.

Any concern about an overemphasis on new Irish writing to the detriment of the existing repertoire - and included in the definition of the repertoire are classic, foreign work as well as new forms of theatre - is only partially reflected in the views of those surveyed on this issue. While more than one-quarter (27%) of respondents agree or agree strongly with this statement more than 60% disagree (See Appendix III, Table A2).

One key informant is very concerned about the narrowing of the repertoire and of the relative neglect of contemporary and classical foreign works.

It so happens that, at the moment, because of the Arts Council everyone is doing the writing and the problem of everyone doing the writing is that every-one is neglecting rewriting. Because companies are encouraged to go down the route of new writing, we have audiences who are very familiar with contemporary Irish work and who have never seen contemporary or classical French, Italian, Spanish work. There is something very worrying about this lack of a window on the wider world in the long term.

We are becoming very reductive in our concerns and this is a worry ...for anyone working in the theatre. It is when you match yourself against some of these big plays that you actually develop and actually learn.

Not everyone, however, shares these views.

There is an obsession with Ireland by theatre practitioners. This is understandable because of the newness of the State. Much of the work in Irish theatre is concerned with exploring Irish cultural identity. This can be limiting, particularly to those coming from the outside who are not interested in this issue...

As for preserving the repertoire

There is a need to revive Irish work but the problem is that not enough work is published. Old plays often only exist on A4 sheets. This causes problems for second production before it is forgotten. There is now so much 'new' work which will never be done again.

Some practitioners believe that the Irish repertoire could be developed by assisting foreign companies to tour here. Others suggested that one of the problems with Irish theatre is that it looks to Britain and not enough to Europe for inspiration.

We are very dependent on the West End and Broadway type production. At best we could describe our new direction and new writing as alternative main stream.

There is not enough contact with European theatre which would be a source of new ideas for new young companies and producers.

This would open up new ways of working and a new language of the theatre. Connections must be established.

We need to have an exchange program with Europe whereby their producers and actors can work here and Irish producers and actors can work in other European theatre companies We need to learn through direct experience. The Galway Arts festival about 10 years ago were involved in bringing very radical European productions to Ireland. Macnas was born from such a European experience. The mask making, circus influence and style of performance all came from direct foreign influence.

An exchange program could be set up whereby small groups from the Irish theatre could go and work and put on workshops abroad and groups from abroad could come and work and also put on workshops here. These small Irish groups could spread the new ideas here by working with other companies.

Some practitioners were of the view that certain companies were intrinsically good at developing new repertoire while others were not, and that such companies should be fostered.

Nothing other than providing funding to small companies is suggested for stimulating new repertoire. New developments and good developments somehow happen, despite the difficulties which companies face.

This, however, would necessarily involve the plug being

pulled on companies which are consistently weak, freeing up greater funding resources and giving others a chance

SECTION FIVE

TOURING

Touring has been an integral and vibrant part of the Irish theatre scene since the last century. From the mid-1960s onwards, however, escalating costs, changing life-styles and alternative employment opportunities for theatre practitioners began to impact very severely, particularly on the “independent” production managements, i.e. those who were not in receipt of subsidy. These managements were forced to restrict the scope of their touring activities.

Pressure from the sector led to the establishment, in 1974, of the Irish Theatre Company (ITC) which was given as its principal mandate the task of bringing a programme of professional theatre productions to venues throughout the country and, especially, to small communities and centres.

In 1976, the Arts Council assumed responsibility for grants to the theatre sector which had hitherto been administered by the Department of Finance. These included the grant to the Irish Theatre Company. The level of support to the ITC 1974-1982 is outlined in Table 5.1

TABLE 5.1 Subsidy levels in Irish Theatre Company 1974-1982

Year	Source	Amount £ Drama Budget	% of Arts Council
1974	Department of Finance	75,000	
1975	”	100,000	
1976	Arts Council 114,000	16.75	
1977	”	134,000	17.76
1978	”	163,000	17.41
1979	”	189,900	16.3
1980	”	223,541	14.67
1981	”	287,100	16.4
1982	”	85,000	4.6

Source: The Arts Council, Dublin

From 1976, the Arts Council also assisted and encouraged the establishment of theatres and arts centres in a number of towns and cities, particularly Limerick, Cork, Sligo and Tralee.

In 1979, on foot of representations from both companies and Equity, the Arts Council inaugurated a scheme to assist “independent” managements to tour and in 1982, the Arts Council decided to discontinue funding to the ITC and replace it with a scheme designed to maximise the limited resources available for theatre touring. The new Theatre Touring Scheme was geared primarily, though not exclusively, towards the work of independent production companies.

The principal objectives of the Theatre Touring Scheme were - to take account of the development of professionally managed theatres throughout the country, to enable a consistently high standard of production and presentation in touring theatre to be achieved, - to stimulate the efforts of independent theatre production companies, - to sustain and if possible increase employment opportunities for members of Equity and - to provide access on as wide a basis as possible to audiences throughout the country. In order to co-ordinate this new scheme and to process applications for grant-aid to the Arts Council and to provide other back-up services, particularly to new touring companies, the Council also provided funding to the National Touring Agency. However the NTA, ceased to operate in 1986, following the cut-back in funding for the scheme in the Council's budget that year, which in turn resulted from a cut-back in government funding to the Council.

The Theatre Touring Scheme has been modified over the years in the light of representations from venue managements and production companies and to take account of the changing sector environment. A summary view of these changes is provided in Figure 1 Appendix V.

Changes in the budget allocated to the touring scheme are outlined in Table 5.2 .

TABLES 5.2 Arts Council Drama Budget and Touring Grants 1976-1995

Year	Drama Budget £	Percentage of Total Arts Exp.	Touring Grants £	Percentage of Total Drama Budget
1976	680,308	71	118,150	17.4
1977	754,357	66	134,000	17.7
1978	936,160	64	170,500	18.2
1979	1,164,840	51	204,600	17.6
1980	1,506,115	51	263,411	17.5
1981	1,748,994	48	314,290	18
1982	1,831,461	47	239,768	13.1
1983	2,338,725	50	250,615	10.7
1984	2,547,223	50	356,617	14
1985	2,580,504	48	323,162	12.52
1986	2,591,473	47	197,037	7.6
1987	2,754,508	43	301,974	10.9
1988	2,850,633	44	273,310	9.58
1989	3,012,538	44	325,300	10.8
1990	3,578,769	40	431,616	12.06
1991	3,631,514	36	367,419	10.01
1992	3,339,007	35	344,779	10.01
1993	3,926,045	36	499,574	12.07
1994	4,654,420	36	549,168	11.08
1995 (projected)	5,490,000	36	490,000	8.9

Source: The Arts Council, Dublin

Trends in Touring

Data on the extent of touring in Ireland are gathered from two sources: 1) the survey responses from production companies (which refers to the 234 productions originating in the Republic of Ireland that were toured in the past five years) and 2) the Arts Council records on tours that it funded between 1982-1994. This sub-section describes, first, the information collected from the present survey and, second, the information on Arts Council funded touring, which is a more limited dataset but one which covers a longer period.

The period 1990-1994 is covered by both sources and the Arts Council information for this period accords with that collected independently from the production companies, i.e. 31 nationally-toured productions were funded by the Arts Council in both the returns from the survey and in the Arts Council statistics.

Touring Locations

Just 234 productions were toured, i.e. less than half of the total number of the 522 originating in the Republic of Ireland. By far the biggest proportion of these toured nationally, 81 % or 189. Northern Ireland and Britain were the most favoured of non Republic of Ireland locations (20% and 18% respectively of the 234 toured productions toured to these locations), while a relatively small proportion visited the US (9%) or a European country other than Britain (6%).

TABLE 5.3 Touring Locations (in percentages)

Locations	
Nationally	81
Northern Ireland	20
Britain	18
United States of America	9
European Country other than Britain	6
Other Country	11

Note: The percentages represent the proportion of the 234 toured productions which visited each location.

Language spoken

The vast majority of toured productions (84%) were to English-speaking destinations only.

TABLE 5.4 Language in Country of Tours

Language	Percentages
English	84
Non-English	1
Combination of both	10
Information Incomplete	2
TOTAL NUMBER	234

Geographical spread

Just 6% of productions toured nationally were to rural areas only compared with 33% to urban areas only. The majority (60%) included both in their tour.

TABLE 5.5 Location of Nationally Toured Production Venues

Location	Percentages
Rural areas	6
Urban areas	33
Both	60
Incomplete Information	1
TOTAL NUMBER	189

Rest of Leinster fared worst in terms of the proportion of productions which were toured there (47%). There was a fairly even pattern of distribution throughout the other three regions, with Dublin at 64%, Munster at 70% and Connacht/Ulster at 66%.

TABLE 5.6 Regions Covered in Nationally Toured Productions (in percentages)

Regions	
Dublin	64
Rest of Leinster	47
Munster	70
ConnachV Ulster	66

Number of venues toured in the Republic of Ireland

While almost half (48%) of the nationally toured productions visited five or fewer locations, a sizeable proportion (26%) visited between six and fifteen, while a further 17% visited between sixteen and fifty locations and a surprising 9% visited more than 50 locations.

TABLE 5.7 Number of Venues for Nationally Toured Productions

Number	Percentages
3 locations or less	31
4-5 locations	17
6-15 locations	26
16-50 locations	17
More than 50	9
TOTAL NUMBER	189

Attendance figures

As was the case noted for staging of first productions, less than one-quarter (21%) of nationally toured productions are reported as having 50% or less of seating take-up. Twenty-six per cent are reported as attracting between 50% and 75% of seating take-up while 40% are reported as achieving a take-up of more than 75%.

TABLE 5.8 Audience attendance at Nationally Toured Productions

Percentage Attendance	Percentages
50 or less	21
51-75	26
More than 75	40
Incomplete information	13
TOTAL NUMBER	189

Nature of Venue

Just over one-third (36%) of nationally toured productions were toured to only professionally managed venues. Forty-one per cent were toured to a combination of professionally and non-professionally managed venues while 7% were toured to community-run venues.

TABLE 5.9 Nature of Venues for Nationally Toured Productions

Nature of Venue	Percentages
Professionally Managed	36
Non-professionally Managed	14
Community Run	7
Combination of professionally and non-professionally run	41
Incomplete information	2
TOTAL NUMBER	189

Funding

Of the 234 productions that toured, thirty-one (14%) received funding specifically for this purpose. The majority (84%) did not (though they could have been in receipt of revenue or other grants).

National Theatre Society

Of the 80 productions staged by the National Theatre Society in the past five years, 24 (30%) had toured.

Arts Council Funded Touring Productions 1982 - 1994.

This sub-section describes the information contained in the Arts Council records on touring. These records provide detailed information on the 94 productions funded in the period 1982 -1992, less detailed information was available for the 21 productions funded in 1993 and 1994.

Number of Arts Council funded productions

In the period 1982 - 1994, a total of 115 touring productions were funded by the Arts Council.

TABLE 5.10 Arts Council Funded Tours: Touring Production funded 1982 - 1994*

Year	Number of Productions
1982	12
1983	11
1984	13
1985	9
1986	6
1987	8
1988	11
1989	8
1990	7
1991	6
1992	3
1993	13
1994	8
TOTAL NUMBER	115

Number of venues

Almost 40% of funded productions visited between one and four venues, 37% visited between five and nine while just 20% visited more than ten venues

TABLE 5.11 Arts Council Funded Tours: Number of Venues Toured 1982 -1992

Number of Venues	Percentages
1-4	39
5-9	37
10-14	17
15 or more	3
Incomplete Information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	94

Average attendance at each performance

Almost one-half (48%) of productions achieved either 50% or less audience attendance, a further 14% achieved between 51% and 75% while just 14% achieved more than a 75% average attendance pattern.

TABLE 5.12 Arts Council Funded Tours 1982 -1992: Average Attendance at Touring Performance

Average Percentage Attendance	Percentages
50 or less	48
51 - 75	14
More than 75	14
Incomplete Information	24
TOTAL NUMBER	94

Touring Patterns

Table 5.13 provides a detailed breakdown of the pattern of touring throughout the country in respect of the 94 touring productions. The Table shows the information disaggregated in terms of number of visits to (a) most frequently visited venues and (b) all other venues shown on a county basis. Where more than one venue in the county was toured, this is indicated in the Table.

The venues that were most frequently visited were the major centres - Sligo, Limerick, Cork, Tralee and Galway in that order. In fact, the principal touring circuit would appear to be that of two or more of these major centres. Dublin and Waterford also showed a sizeable number of visits, 24 and 19 respectively.

Another circuit can be discerned in the locations in Counties Galway, Clare and Mayo toured by the Druid Company.

No discernible pattern emerged in relation to any other location, although it should be noted that some locations seem to have been particularly poorly served. Noticeable in this regard are the counties of Kildare, Wicklow, Laois, Longford and Meath. In many instances people in these counties are further distant from the next closest centre which is well served than they are likely to travel. In the audience survey carried out in 1994 it was shown that people are unlikely to travel more than 20 miles to an arts event (The Public and the Arts, 1994).

TABLE 5.13 Arts Council Funded Tours 1982 -1992: Number of Productions Visiting Touring Venues

(a) Major Venues	Number	
Sligo	68	
Limerick	63	
Cork	46	
Tralee	37	
Galway	35	
Dublin	24	
Waterford	19	
(b) Other Venues	Number of Venues	
	At least one	2 or More
County Carlow	4	-
County Cavan	11	-
County Clare	18	2
County Cork (other than Cork City)	13	3
County Donegal	10	1
County Galway (other than Galway City)	5	7
County Kerry (other than Tralee)	6	2
County Kildare	-	1
County Kilkenny	16	-
County Laois	1	-
County Leitrim	3	-
County Limerick (other than Limerick City)	3	-
County Longford	1	-
County Louth	11	1
County Mayo	11	3
County Meath	1	1
County Monaghan	13	-
County Offaly	6	-
County Roscommon	3	-
County Sligo (other than Sligo Town)	1	-
County Tipperary	11	-
County Waterford (other than Waterford City)	4	-
County Westmeath	9	1
County Wexford	19	1

County Wicklow	-	-
Northern Ireland	5	1
United Kingdom	2	-

TABLE 5.14 Arts Council Funded Tours 1982 - 1992: Number of Performances per Touring Production 1982-1992

	Percentages
10 or less	12
11-20	42
21 - 30	27
More than 30	16
Incomplete Information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	94

Number of Performances

The number of performances varied widely and correspond again to the figures found for the 522 productions originating in the Republic of Ireland on which information was gathered by direct survey. Twelve per cent staged ten performances or less, 42% between eleven and twenty and a further 27% between twenty-one and thirty with just 16% staging more than thirty performances.

TABLE 5.15 Arts Council Funded Tours 1982 -1994: Type of Production (1)

Type	Percentages
New Writer (i.e. previously unstaged)	5
New Work of established writer (1st Staging)	37
Other 20th Century Work	39
Pre 20th Century Work	14
Incomplete Information	5
TOTAL NUMBER	115

Touring repertoire

As is the case in relation to the survey information on all productions since 1990, overwhelmingly the productions can be seen to be the work of 20th century writers (81 %). Almost half are productions which had never previously been staged with 5% of productions by new writers and 37% representing new work of established writers (Table 5.15).

TABLE 5.16 Arts Council Funded Tours 1982 -1992: Type of Production (2)

Type	Percentages
Irish Writer in English Language	53
Irish Writer in Irish Language	9
New translation by Irish Writer of Foreign Language Work	6
Non-Irish Writer in English Language	23
Other translation of Foreign Language Work	1
Devised/adapted/work by several authors	9
TOTAL NUMBER	115

Two-thirds (68%) of the repertoire is by Irish writers, most of whom wrote original work in the English language (Table 5.16).

Perspectives on Touring

Touring of professional Irish theatre productions in the Republic of Ireland is ranked as most important by 64% of survey respondents. Touring of professional Irish theatre productions abroad and foreign companies touring Ireland as well as festivals presenting international and Irish work are perceived as less important: these are ranked as most important by 44%, 45% and 48% of respondents respectively (See Appendix III, Table A.3).

Touring of professional Irish theatre in Ireland was chosen by 14% of respondents as their first priority for funding and by 7% as their second priority. No one chose touring of professional Irish theatre productions abroad, foreign companies touring Ireland or festivals presenting international and Irish work as their first priority. (See Section Three, Table 3.1).

Among key informants there is a widely held view that touring is an important and necessary aspect of a vibrant theatre industry.

The people of Ireland whether in Mayo or Dublin are entitled to see good entertaining theatre. Good shows should not be confined to the capital city. There should be much more touring and this should be encouraged by the Arts Council.

Touring policy, and perhaps directly as a consequence, touring in practice in Ireland was the subject of stringent criticism.

Touring policy must change as it serves no one well.

Ireland has the highest touring subsidy in the EU but has the weakest model. It is a costly way of getting variety to the regions.

The Arts Council is the principal target of this criticism in a number of respects:

The criteria used for the allocation of touring grants.

The Arts Council has no criteria for funding touring companies, no apparent logic to their decisions. Funding appears to be given to those companies that didn't receive revenue grants.... and, very often, assistance is given to companies with no track record..

It is unclear what the criteria used by the Arts Council are. Decisions do not appear to be on the basis of actually viewing a performance. Sometimes it is on the basis of a proposal only. It is essential to actually view a performance and ascertain audience response before sending it on tour.

The Arts Council views its role as one of striking a balance between the needs of audiences, the programming policies of receiving venues, and the wishes of production companies to bring their work to wider audiences. The Council believes that there are some grounds for satisfaction in the growth and expansion of the scheme over the years but

it is well aware that many production companies view the touring scheme as a 'supplementary' grant and/or as a means of generating surplus income rather than as a means of enabling them to undertake touring without sustaining loss. The question of whether the Council should allocate some of the 'touring budget' to struggling production companies both in Dublin and elsewhere and thereby ensure more actual product being supplied to the market (audiences and venues) is one which needs to be decided on a policy level.

To date, the Council has not been prescriptive as to the kind of plays or productions it will fund to tour. It has preferred to assess applications on the basis that they represent the preferred choices of the production companies.

In relation to prior viewing of a performance the Council contends that while some work may have been produced and seen prior to being offered a touring grant, to make that a requirement of the scheme would create enormous problems of scheduling for venue managements and production companies alike.

The proposals coming from companies are assessed therefore, inter alia, in the light of the track record of and commitment to touring of each applicant and on the intrinsic merit of the proposal.

From its point of view, the Arts Council has experienced difficulty trying to reconcile the often differing demands, expectations and standards of behaviour of venues and production companies.

Some venue managements outside Dublin have from the outset taken a negative approach to their role in the scheme and have failed to grasp the opportunities which "programming" funds offer them to act collectively and/or to "network."

Some venues managers have little understanding of their implicit and long-established responsibilities to visiting touring managements. This situation is improving as more experienced people are appointed to management positions.

Production companies, on the other hand, will not undertake touring unless they are fully protected against loss.

The quality of the toured product

Survey respondents had quite positive views on the quality of touring productions. Although more than a quarter (26%) regarded this quality as poor, 69% said it was adequate or good. Very few (1 %), however, saw it as excellent (See Appendix III, Table A.1).

The vast majority of respondents (85%) agree that the quality of touring productions is very variable (See Appendix III, Table A.2). This is also the view of the Arts Council.

For key informants, however, one effect of current policy is that the quality of productions sent on tour is not good.

The effect of bad touring productions on audience levels is a concern to many of those interviewed.

A poor quality production which is known to be Arts Council assisted has an extremely detrimental impact on audiences. It confuses the audience. By virtue of being funded, it is assumed to be regarded as good by the Arts Council and audiences begin to question their own judgement. It also deters audiences from attending other productions.

Passive role of venues

Another area of concern among key informants is the lack of control venues have on what touring productions they take.

The view of venues are not sought in touring. Yet they are obliged to take touring companies. Venues should have more power to buy what they want, particularly with regard to the peak tourist season. The current system is not market/demand driven.

Venues need a voice in advising on the product they receive -something they don't have at the moment.

The Arts Council regards the decision in 1990 to inaugurate 'programme' funds as responding to this point. While the need to allow venues to have a part in deciding what productions they get is widespread, one interviewee proposes ways and means in which venue managers could participate in selection

There is a need for a scheme to promote the revival of new work performed elsewhere and to assist venue managers to see these productions on their first outing.

There is a need to encourage venue managers to understand their audience... Venue managers need to develop confidence about theatre in order to enter into dialogue with production companies. They therefore need access to see work in order to build up their experience. The model used by festivals where- by the organiser spends a lot of time going to see work is good...

A technical audit of venues which would be provided to companies is also suggested.

The role of venues is also brought up by the Arts Council which recognises that it needs to decide whether or not to build-in grants to the annual grants of receiving venues, ear-mark these for theatre touring and leave venues themselves to go into the market as buyers.

An alternative would be to identify three or four production companies that have shown a commitment and ability to tour and to build in a touring element in their annual grants.

The nature of the toured repertoire

A suggestion was also made that the Irish repertoire could be developed by assisting foreign companies to tour here.

The Arts Council should consider assisting foreign companies to tour here. The injection of new styles and ideas is crucial. Horizons need to be broadened.

The Council responds by stating that it has freed-up venues in receipt of Arts Council funding to receive professional production companies from outside Ireland. However, the Council must prioritise the needs of home-based theatre companies in terms of access to support funding.

Others discuss ways and means of overcoming the concern of venue managers to ‘play safe’ in the type of production used including the use of funding leverage, while this is something which the Council argues is part of current policy.

The Arts Council should split its funding between funds for generating new work and funding work that is proven to be of good quality to tour

and

The explicit encouragement of using ‘experimental’ slots in venues which would include post show workshops in which the audience would participate and to which theatre luminaries would be invited to contribute. This would make it allowable for something new not to be good without damaging credibility with the audience

A further recommendation is that the emphasis should be on the repertoire of available productions rather than on production companies

the emphasis should be on available work rather than on companies which have an established track record.

The Arts Council is also concerned with the issue of the touring repertoire, particularly with the tendency to go for the “lowest common denominator”. Professionalism is not valued by audiences or by some venue managers and the very popularity of the amateur drama movement may operate against the success of professional touring.

Note: The touring policy of the National Theatre Society and attitudes towards it are described in Section Seven.

Organisational issues in relation to touring

A commonly expressed view is that there is also an organisational problem with regard to touring which should be addressed by the Arts Council.

An interfacing organisation is required between production companies and venues.

Networks don't exist in touring (for example between rural promoters) but these should be encouraged and then worked on.

There should be a touring officer within the Arts Council. His/her task would be to fund a number of productions and to guarantee quality venues.

An International Touring Agency is required to handle Irish and foreign productions in Ireland and to assist logistically and organisationally those Irish companies that wish to tour internationally.

The Arts Council is also concerned about this issue.

There is no coordinating agency since the National Touring Agency (NTA) capable of meeting the needs of an ever-growing constituency.

The question is whether the Arts Council itself should, like its counterparts in Britain, develop a touring department to take responsibility for all aspects of touring: good and efficient use of scarce resources; accountability; avoiding clashes of dates; dissemination of information; standardization of contractual arrangements etc.

Such a touring department could also look into the possibility of developing large scale, middle-scale and small scale touring circuits and liaise with parallel bodies in Northern Ireland, Britain and Europe.

Models of best practice

That the need to revise touring policy and practice is a major concern of key informants is shown by the frequency by which models of good practice cited by them relate to the organisation of touring.

The French approach to touring, whereby regional companies go into national theatres to stage productions warrants closer examination.

The British model of touring is interesting, whereby a production company is franchised to tour and awarded 'National Touring Company status. Also there is a British touring network in place.

Touring grants in Britain are also given to bring in foreign production companies. This type of exposure to foreign productions is crucial for development...

SECTION SIX

THE AUDIENCE FOR THEATRE

The Public and the Arts, a survey of behaviour and attitudes in Ireland, was commissioned by the Arts Council in 1994 with the three-fold purpose of:

- providing comparative data with an earlier - 1981 - study, tracking any changes in behaviour of the population in relation to attendance at arts events, acquisition of arts goods and participation in arts activities
- providing more comprehensive information of behaviour patterns of the Irish people in relation to the arts and gathering new data on areas such as the importance of home-based technology as a means of accessing the arts, on levels of awareness of art activities and on the sources of information to people on these activities
- measuring attitudes to the definition, role and significance of arts in the community, economic and social life.

The data from this study has been reanalysed in greater detail than previously with a view to detailing the demographic and attitudinal profile of the Irish theatre going public/publics.

Changes in attendance 1981-1994

A comparison of aggregate attendances in 1994 at those art forms for which data was collected in 1981 shows that overall attendance rose from 60% to 78% in the intervening period.

In the case of some artforms, for example popular music and exhibitions of painting/sculpture, the increase is quite dramatic. Attendance at plays is also one of the artforms in which the increase is significant with attendance rising from 20% in 1981 to 37% in 1994. It now ranks third after films and popular music performances in attendance at art events. (The Public and the Arts, 1994:21)

Impact of Regional variation and Occupational Class

Urban areas continue to have a higher rate of attendance than rural areas. However, the increase in attendance at plays is particularly marked in rural areas where attendance rose from 14% in 1981 to 34% in 1994 compared to urban areas where the increase was from 24% to 39%. As a result of the difference in the rate of increase, the gap between urban and rural areas narrowed considerably from 10 percentage points in 1981 to 5 in 1994.

The increase in the rate of attendance occurred in all regions but it is most marked in "Rest of Leinster" where attendance rose from 7% in 1981 to 33% in 1994 and "ConnaughtV Ulster" where it increased from 9% in 1981 to 25% in 1994. (The Public and the Arts, 1994:23)

The middle class continue to be the most frequent attender at arts events with 92% of this group attending at least one such event in 1994. In relation to certain types of events, and particularly those which form the focus of the publicly-funded arts, there is somewhat of a widening of the class differential, particularly in relation to the semi-skilled/unskilled working class. These events include plays as well as performances of classical music and exhibitions of paintings or sculptures - artforms which traditionally attracted a middle class audience (The Public and the Arts, 1994:24)

International comparisons

International comparisons indicate that, among the countries considered, Ireland has a relatively large play-going public, with 37% having attended a play in the past year compared to 45% in France, 37% in Finland. Britain as a whole and Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales all have lower levels of attendance. (The Public and the Arts: 1994:78)

Profiling the Theatre Audience

From an analysis of the audiences for the different artforms, the 1994 survey identified four discrete types of activities. Two of these clusters of activities are associated with what has traditionally been known as 'high' art and two with what might be broadly understood as groupings of 'popular' cultural events (The Public and the Arts: 1994, 57).

Plays, along with exhibitions, orchestral music, choral music, opera, arthouse films, contemporary dance, ballet and literature/poetry readings, rank as 'high' art. High artforms are further divided into two clusters - mainstream (termed j83) and experimental (termed EXPERA). Plays, along with opera, orchestral music, choral music and musicals fall into the first of these.

Each of the clusters has an artform which is markedly more popular than the others in the same cluster. In the case of HIART, the most popular artform is play attendance which - at 37% - is significantly higher than that of any other artform in either of the high art clusters.

The 1994 survey established that 'high' art attenders - whether of the mainstream or experimental type - have a particular profile. People who belong to either of these categories of attenders are more likely to be from Dublin than any other regions; they are more likely to be middle class than any other occupational grouping; to have a higher educational level; to be older and to be female. (The Public and the Arts, 1994: 56)

Frequency of attendance

In the 1994 study, analysis of attendance at artforms was further refined by breaking down attendance figures into one-time attenders - who attended once in the previous 12 months, sporadic attenders - who attended from between one and six times and regular attenders - who attended more than 6 times.

Frequency of attendance gives some grounds for optimism but little room for complacency in that the proportions which could be considered to demonstrate a sustained interest in a given artform, including attendance at plays, are relatively small. While the overall attendance rate was 37%, 21 % of the sample attended more than once - 19% attended between 1 and 6 times and just 2% attended more than six times. (The Public and the Arts, 1994:37)

For the purposes of this review it was considered of interest to take the analysis of *all* play attenders one step further and to identify the major (if any) differences between the characteristics of different types of play attenders i.e., those who never attend a play at all, those who attend but only sporadically and those who are frequent and regular attenders. Table 6.1 shows the relationships between frequency of attendance at plays, and a series of sociodemographic factors - gender, age, marital status, whether or not the respondents have children under 18, occupational class, education, area and region.

An analysis of this table shows that it is those who are *frequent* or *regular play attenders* who are most likely to be middle-class, educated to third level and to live in an urban area, particularly Dublin. One-off and irregular attenders are closer in profile to the general population.

However, the demographic characteristics of age, marital status and presence of children have relatively little influence on the likelihood of theatre going. Overall, women are more likely than men to attend a play and the difference between the two groups is most marked for the sporadic attenders.

Table 6.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Theatre Audience

	Never	Once a year only	1-6 times per year	More than 6 times
Gender				
Male	68	15	15	2
Female	59	15	23	3
Age:				
15-24	66	17	16	1
25 - 34	65	15	17	3
35 - 44	60	15	22	2
45 - 54	62	12	22	4
55 +	62	15	20	2
Marital Status:				
Married	62	15	21	3
Single	66	16	17	2
Children < 18:				
Yes	65	15	19	1
No	62	16	19	3
Class:				
Middle Class	42	19	32	7
Skilled Working Class	65	17	16	1
Semi-skilled/Unskilled Working Class	80	10	9	1
Farmers	69	14	17	1
Education:				
Third level (currently/completed)	37	22	34	8
Second level (currently/completed)	60	14	24	3
Attended Second level	75	15	10	3
Primary	81	11	9	-
Area:				
Rural	66	14	18	1
Urban	61	16	20	4
Region:				
Dublin	52	18	24	5
Dublin County	56	21	24	0
Rest of Leinster	67	15	15	3
Munster 63	16	16	20	2
Connacht/Ulster	75	8	16	1

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

Occupational class

Almost three-fifths (58%) of middle class respondents had attended a play in the previous 12 months, 32% of this group attended between 1 and 6 times and a further 7% were frequent attenders. This is in marked contrast to the semi- or unskilled working class only 20% of whom attended at all, 10% more than once and 1 % more than 6 times.

The skilled working class occupy an intermediary position, with an overall attendance rate of 35%. But this group also contrasts strongly with the middle class when it comes to more regular attendance: 17% attended more than once - compared to 39% of middle class respondents and 1 % attended more than 6 times. The pattern for farmers is somewhat similar to that of the skilled working class, with an overall attendance of 31 %. Seventeen per cent of this group also attended 1-6 times but no farmer attended more than 6 times.¹

Education

The pattern observed in relation to social class is closely followed in the related variable of education. The higher the level of education, the higher the rate of overall attendance at plays.

Those with third level education are by far the best and the most frequent attenders. More than three-fifths (63%) of those who had third-level education had attended at least one play in the past year, more than one-third (34%) attended 1-6 times and a further 8% were frequent attenders.

These figures drop fairly steeply to 41%, 24% and 3% for those with second level education and, even more dramatically, by comparison with the middle-class figures, 81 % of those with only primary level education never attended and none of this group attended more than 6 times a year.

Region

It has been noted above that urban dwellers are better attenders than rural people. Thirty-nine per cent of urban dwellers and 34% of rural people attended at least once in the previous 12 months. Rural dwellers, however, show a relatively high level of sporadic attendance. Eighteen per cent attended from 1 to 6 times while 14% of the group attended only once. Only 1 % of the rural group, however, could be classified as frequent attenders while the proportion for urban dwellers was 4%.

Dublin has a higher attendance rate than any of the other regions with almost one in every two people (48%) attending at least once a year. Almost a quarter (24%) attend 1-6 times a year and 5% attend more than 6 times.

The lowest rates of attendance are found in Connaught/Ulster where only 1 % of the population are regular attenders and 75% never go to a play. Those who do go, however, are likely to do so more than once a year.

1 This could be a question of access. Even the most avid play goer from a rural area might find it hard to find more than six plays to go to, particularly when it is remembered that few people will travel more than twenty miles to an arts event. (The Public and the Arts, 1994:53).

Profile of the Home-based Audience

More people (45%) view or listen to a play on television/radio than go to a live performance (37%). This follows the general pattern established by the 1994 survey: the home-based audience for any artform is greater than the audience at a live event.

Of the arts activities viewed/listened to, mainstream US/British films are by far the most popular with 89% viewing these on television and/or video. Plays rank second with 45%.

Television is clearly the more favoured medium. One-quarter (25%) of the population watched a play/s on television only, 5% listened to radio and 15% used both. (The Public and the Arts, 1994: 41).

For the purposes of this review the home-based audience was further analysed to identify the major (if any) differences between the characteristics of those who never watch/ listen to a play on television/radio at all and those who do.

As with attendance at live events, the demographic characteristics of gender and presence of children have relatively little influence on the likelihood of watching plays on television or listening to plays on radio.

Occupational class

The pattern for social class is similar to that found for attendance at live performances. Viewing/listening is highest among the middle class, lowest among the semi-skilled/unskilled working class with farmers and the skilled working class occupying an intermediate position.

The differences between the classes is not, however, as marked as it is for attendance. For viewing/listening, there are only 9 percentage points between each of the categories and an overall spread of 20, compared to 38 for attendance. Home consumption is, presumably, more accessible and less expensive and watching television is an all class occupation.

Television is the preferred medium for all classes, with the middle class almost twice as likely to opt for both media than any of the other groups.

Education

A similar pattern can be seen in the related variable of education - the higher the level of education, the more likely home arts consumption but again the spread between classes is not as dramatic as for attendance.

Television is the preferred medium for those with primary or secondary level education while those with third level tend to opt more for both media

Region

More urban than rural people view/listen to plays at home. Television is the preferred medium for both but is more so in urban than in rural areas. Radio is, relatively speaking, slightly more popular in rural than urban areas.

Home viewing/listening is highest in Dublin and lowest in Munster. The lagging position

of Connaught/Ulster which is very evident in attendance is considerably narrower for home-based listening/viewing.

The use of both media is relatively popular in Dublin and in Dublin County, though television remains the preferred single medium in all regions.

Age and Marital Status

Both age and marital status can be seen to influence the home-based audience for plays. Likelihood of viewing /listening to a play increases with age, and there is a more noticeable use of radio among the older age groups. Significantly more married people (52%) watch/listen to a play compared with single people (44%) and again a greater use of radio by married people can be observed.

Attendance and home viewing/listening

While the survey indicates that the home-based audience for any given artform is greater than the audience at a live event, it is also clear that for the majority of people who attend live events of a particular artform, home-based technology is used as an additional medium rather than as a replacement for actual attendance. Almost two thirds of those who attended a play also watch or listen to plays on television and/or radio. Although this is a significant proportion, it is not as high as the figures for more popular artforms. (The Public and the Arts: 1994: 42)

Table 6.2. Socio-Demographic characteristics of the Home-Based Audience for Plays

	Never	TV	Radio	Both	Don 't know
Gender					
Male	56	25	5	13	1
Female	53	24	5	17	1
Age:					
15-24	74	19	2	4	1
25-34	62	21	4	12	1
35-44	45	32	8	15	1
45-54	44	29	9	17	1
55 +	44	24	6	25	1
Marital Status:					
Married	48	26	7	19	1
Single	66	22	3	8	1
Children < 18:					
Yes	56	27	6	11	-
No	54	24	5	17	1
Class:					
Middle Class	44	29	5	23	-
Skilled Working Class	55	27	5	12	1
Semi-skilled/ Unskilled Working Class	64	19	5	11	1
Farmers	55	26	8	11	1
Education:					
Primary	59	18	9	13	1
Attended Second Level	56	25	5	13	1
Second Level (currently/completed)	53	31	4	12	1
Third Level	48	22	5	25	1
Area:					
Rural	58	23	6	12	1
Urban	51	27	5	18	1

Region:

Dublin	42	28	6	23	1
Dublin County	53	18	7	22	1
Rest of Leinster	54	29	6	11	-
Munster	64	18	6	12	1
Connact V Ulster	60	26	2	12	1

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy. et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

Frequency of attendance and home consumption

In examining the relationship between attendance at live events and home consumption it is again found that it is the regular theatre-goer who is consistently different in behaviour than the general population. The higher the level of attendance at live events, the higher the rate of home viewing/listening. Forty-three per cent of those who only attend once never view/listen. This falls to 37% for 1-6 timers and drops to 10% for frequent attenders.

Frequent attenders are also notable for their distinct preference for both television and radio for home consumption. (This is also a feature of people over 55, those with higher education and people from Dublin County but to a much lesser extent).

Although 65% of those who never attend a play never watch or listen to one either, a significant proportion, 35%, do - 20% on television, 5 on radio and 10 on both.

Table 6.3 Audience for Both Live Theatre and Home-based Media

	VIEWS ON TV/RADIO				TOTAL NUMBER
	Never	TV	Radio	Both	
	%	%	%		
ATTENDS A PLAY					
NEVER	65	20	5	10	758
ONCE A YEAR	43	32	7	18	180
1 - 6 TIMES	37	32	6	25	230
MORE THAN 6 TIMES	10	33	1	57	30
					1198

Source; *Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council. Dublin, 1994.*

Attendance at Arts Festivals

While the vast majority of respondents do not attend any arts festival, the Dublin Theatre festival is relatively well attended with 7% of respondents having attended at least once (The Public and the Arts, 1994:112).

Once again, regular play attenders form a distinctive group. More than half (54%) of this group - from a nation-wide sample - had attended the Dublin Theatre Festival at least once and 20% attend every year. This is significantly different behaviour from that of the general population.

TABLE 6.4 Frequency of Attendance's of a Play by the Frequency of Attendance's at Dublin's Theatre Festival

ATTENDS A PLAY	ATTENDS DUBLIN THEATRE FESTIVAL				TOTAL NUMBER	
	Never %	Every Year %	Some Years %	Once %	Don't Know	
Never	99	-	1	-	-	758
Once a year	92	1	5	2	-	181
1-6 times	79	4	13	4	-	230
More than 6 times	43	20	27	7	3	30
	93	1	4	2	-	1199

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy. et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

Non-attenders at plays have also, by definition, never attended the Dublin Theatre Festival either. Among theatre goers, 8% of one-time attenders at a play had at one time or another attended the Theatre Festival. This is not significantly different from the general population. However, attendance at the Dublin Theatre Festival goes up noticeably for the sporadic attender (1-6 time attenders), 21 % of these had attended at least once.

The Theatre Audience and other Theatre-related Activities

Purchase of arts goods

A comparison of purchases in those categories of arts goods which were measured in 1981 with purchases in 1994 showed that there has been considerable growth in two categories in the intervening period: the purchase of novels, poetry and plays by living Irish artists (31 % compared with 15%) and of records/tapes of classical music (21 % compared with 10%) (The Public and the Arts, 1994:25).

In that survey, just 4% of the population were found to buy plays. However, Table 6.5 in relation to the playgoer shows that, while there is little difference between one time and sporadic attenders and the general public, once again it emerges that regular theatre goers are a case apart when it comes to purchasing plays. While 96% of the population do not buy plays, 27% of regular attenders do so regularly and a further 13% buy plays occasionally (The Public and the Arts, 1994:44).

TABLE 6.5 Those who Both attend Plays and who Purchase Plays

	PURCHASES PLAYS			TOTAL NUMBER
	Never	Regularly	Occasionally	
Attends a play				
NEVER	99	1	-	756
ONCE A YEAR	96	4	-	180
1-6 TIMES	92	6	2	230
MORE THAN 6 TIMES	60	27	13	30
				1196

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

There is some slight relationship between purchasing plays and viewing/listening to them on television or radio. Those who do not view or listen to plays are highly unlikely to buy them. Of those who watch plays on television only, 6% say they are occasional or regular buyers. Those who listen to plays on the radio are more likely to buy them than those who watch plays on television, as are those who make use of both media.

TABLE 6.6 Use of Home-based Media by Likelihood of purchasing of Plays

	PURCHASES PLAYS			TOTAL NUMBER
	Never	Regularly	Occasionally	
Views /listens on TV/Radio				
NEVER	98	1	1	653
TV	94	3	2	294
RADIO	91	10	-	63
BOTH	90	9	1	177
				1187

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

Participation in Amateur Drama

More than one-third (35%) of respondents participated in one or more of a comprehensive range of arts activities. A total of 4% of respondents participated in drama, 3% were members of a drama club/group and 1 % had attended an educational course/class in the area (The Public and the Arts: 1994: 48).

Table 6.7 shows that more than one-quarter (27%) of regular attenders were found to also take part in amateur drama activities.

TABLE 6.7 Attendance at a Play and Participating in Amateur Drama

	Participating in Amateur Drama		TOTAL NUMBER
	NEVER	TAKES PART	
ATTENDS A PLAY			
NEVER	99	1	758
ONCE IN A YEAR	99	1	181
1-6 TIMES	91	9	230
MORE THAN 6 TIMES	73	27	30

Source: Data Gathered for the Study. Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts'. Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

Average number of Arts Events

Table 6.8 shows the average number of arts events attended by respondents during the previous 12 months. Here again it is noticeable that likelihood of attending other arts activities increases with the frequency of attendance. Regular attenders have an average of 7 - more than twice the overall average. It would appear therefore that regular attenders at plays are also good frequenters of other arts events, thus creating competition therefore, not only for purveyors of plays but for other arts events too.

Table 6.8 Average Number of Arts Events attended during the last 12 Months by Frequency of Attendance at a Play

	AVERAGE NUMBER OF ARTS EVENTS OR ARTFORMS
ATTENDS A PLAY	
NEVER	2
ONCE A YEAR	4
1-6 TIMES	5
MORE THAN 6 TIMES	7
Average for Total Population	3

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council, Dublin, 1994.

The Views of the Theatre Audience on the Social, Cultural and Economic Significance of the Arts

An examination of the priorities for spending on the arts among the general population surveyed for the 1994 study shows that local, amateur and community-based arts activity emerges top of the list with 47% giving it either first or second choice (20% and 27%). A further 25% support spending on professional art groups and venues operating at local and regional level as their first or second choice. (The Public and the Arts, 1994: 71 and 73)

Both of these choices are related to the regional origin of the respondent - non-Dubliners being more likely to support them. Both are also related to education but expenditure on local, amateur and community-based arts activity is more likely to be the choice of those with lower levels of education while support for professional arts groups and venues operating at local and regional level is favoured by those with higher education. (The Public and the Arts: 1994: 71)

Play goers, however, have a different pattern of choice from the rest of the population. This is particularly noticeable in frequent attenders and becomes even more evident if first and second choices are treated separately. Local amateur and community-based arts activity - which is the clear favourite in the general sample - is cited as first choice by 22% of non-attenders but by only 7% of frequent attenders.

By contrast, 43% of frequent play attenders put funding for "National organisations and events such as the Abbey Theatre, Galway Arts Festival, Wexford Festival of Opera, Siamsa Tire" as their first priority, compared to 18% of the general public.

The second most common priority for frequent attenders is new and experimental work (20%). This is almost at the bottom of the list for the general public (7%). There is some convergence with regard to arts programmes dedicated to children and young people (21% for the general public and 17% for frequent attenders).

There is also more homogeneity among frequent attenders in their priorities - 80% of the group fall into the first three choices compared with 59% of the general public who have more widely varying views.

Primarily social or educational and access-related priorities (regional/local, disadvantaged areas) get 65% of first choices among the general population compared to 34% of frequent theatre goers. If one excludes arts programmes dedicated to children and young people, the respective proportions are 44% and 17%, indicating real distinctions, not only in behaviour, but in attitudes and perceptions as well.

TABLE 6.9 Comparison of Views on First Priority for Spending in the Arts by Frequency of Attendance at a Play

FIRST SPENDING PRIORITY	All Respondents	More than 6 times	1-6 times	Once a year	Never attends
Local amateur and community - based arts activity.	20	7	21	17	22
Arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people.	21	17	20	19	21
Arts programmes directed at areas of social disadvantage.	11	3	9	11	12
Professional arts groups and venues operating at local and regional level.	13	7	26	13	12
National organisations and events such as Abbey Theatre, Galway Arts Festival, Wexford Festival Opera, Siamsa Tire.	18	43	23	22	14
The work of individual professional arts such as writers, painters, composers.	6	-	5	7	7
New and experimental work in the arts.	7	20	5	7	7
Arts works and arts events in the Irish language.	5	3	2	2	6
TOTAL	1,200	30	230	180	767

Source; *Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts', Arts Council. Dublin, 1994.*

TABLE 6.10 Comparison of Views on Second Priority for Spending in the Arts by Frequency of Attendance at a Play

FIRST SPENDING PRIORITY	All Respondents	More than 1-6 times	1-6 times	Once a year	Never attends
Local amateur and community - based arts activity.	27	33	22	27	28
Arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people.	23	17	22	22	24
Arts programmes directed at areas of social disadvantage.	15	-	11	17	15
Professional arts groups and venues operating at local and regional level.	13	27	17	12	11
National organisations and events such as Abbey Theatre, Galway Arts Festival, Wexford Festival Opera, Siamsa Tire.	6	3	7	6	6
The work of individual professional arts such as writers, painters, composers.	8	7	10	7	
New and experimental work in the arts.	5	7	8	4	4
Arts works and arts events in the Irish language.	8	7	4	5	5
TOTAL	1,200	30	230	180	767

Source: Data Gathered for the Study, Clancy, et al. 'The Public and the Arts'. Arts Council, Dublin, 1994

The Theatre Practitioners' perspective on the Audience

Marketing and Market Research

Information on a number of indicators on the level of industry emphasis (or lack of) on identifying and understanding the preferences and needs of the theatre audience and of developing suitable promotional and development strategies to meet these needs, was collected in the survey of theatre companies. These indicators comprise information on the employment of marketing personnel; the use and content of marketing plans; and the frequency and type of market research.

Employment of Marketing personnel

Almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents employed a person with specific responsibility for marketing/promotion and/or publicity. The more usual arrangement was to employ someone who would deal with both (58%)¹.

TABLE 6.11 Employment of a Person with Specific Responsibility for Marketing/Promotion

Nature of responsibility	Percentages
Marketing/promotion	7
Publicity	7
Both	58
Neither	25
Incomplete Information	3
TOTAL NUMBER	72

Twenty-one per cent of the 72 organisations had staff whose sole responsibility was marketing. A quarter of all organisations did not employ staff to deal either with marketing/promotion or with publicity while 19% commissioned an external agency to deal with marketing issues for them.

1. See Section Seven for discussion of the National Theatre Society in relation to this issue

Marketing plan

Although the need for marketing is widely recognised, the vast majority of organisations (82%) had no marketing plan.

Those who had, had one which covered a period of more than three years (11 % of total). This is in line with the desire of organisations to have funding awarded on a three year basis.

TABLE 6.12 Length of Coverage of Marketing Plan

Length of coverage	Percentages
1 Year or less	4
More than 1 Year, less than 3 years	1
More than 3 years	11
No Marketing Plan	82
Incomplete information	2
TOTAL NUMBER	72

The issues covered in the marketing plan were primarily advertising /promotion strategy (22% of all organisations), repertoire strategy (17%) and touring and pricing strategy (14% each).

TABLE 6.13 Issues Covered by Marketing Plan (percentages)

Issues covered	
Advertising/Promotion Strategy	22
Repertoire Strategy	17
Pricing Strategy	14
Touring	14

Market research

More than a third of all organisations (36%) never carried out market research, 8% seldom did so and 33% did so irregularly. Twenty-two per cent said they carried out market research regularly.

TABLE 6.14 Frequency of Market Research

Frequency	Percentages
Regularly	22
Irregularly	33
Seldom	8
Never	36
TOTAL NUMBER	72

Most market research undertaken was carried out by in-house personnel. In 53% of organisations, only in-house personnel were involved. Four per cent commissioned research and 7% both commissioned research and had it carried out in-house.

TABLE 6.15 Who does Market Research

	Percentages
In-house personnel	53
Commissioned	4
Both	7
Not applicable. No Market Research	36
TOTAL NUMBER	72

The market research which is carried out in the sector is directed very much at audience development. More than half (58%) of all organisations collected information on audience profile and 46% on patterns of attendance. One-third gathered information on theatre facilities and venues, 29% gathered information on pricing and 25% on repertoire.

Table 6.16 Type of Market Research Information Collected (in percentages) Type

Repertoire	25
Facilities/venue	33
Pricing	29
Audience profile	58
Patterns of attendance	46

Attitudes and Views of Practitioners on the Theatre Audience

The survey respondents accorded the highest rating of importance to audience development and marketing compared with any of the other issues on which their opinion was sought. (See Appendix III, Table A3). However, less than 20% or one in five of those surveyed believed that the audience was well informed in Ireland. The vast majority (82%) believed that the audience's state of knowledge and interest in the theatre was either adequate or poor (See Appendix III, Table A1).

These views are reflected in the views of the key informants who generally believe that greater emphasis needs to be placed on developing audiences. Strategies proposed for this development include:

- artistic vision and high quality programming
- a long-term policy with regard to developing a repertoire
- more direct marketing
- more focused advertising
- getting good reviews

The last of these is of increasing importance as punters are waiting for reviews before going to a play. They are more cautious with disposable income than heretofore.

One of those interviewed believes that there are two kinds of theatre audience in Ireland - the larger number which attends 'popular' theatre and a smaller core audience which attends 'artistic/creative' theatre. The latter group is

'literate' with a knowledge of drama and drama companies and interested in the quality of the production.

Concerns expressed about the core audience include its small scale, its older age profile, the sense of the audience being a middle-class elite and, for some, the need to be more market-driven in choice of productions staged.

The audience for theatre are an elite. They are middle class and middle aged.

Young people are going to movies instead of theatre which changes their imagination. It is, therefore, hard to say if they will eventually turn back to the theatre.

The nature of the audience means that the company has to serve [audience] requirements which they would prefer not to have to do.

Theatre in Dublin would seem to be in crisis. It may also be so in the rest of the country, but evidence suggests that the real crisis is in the conurbation, where there is a sense of a saturation of seats for sale.

One reason suggested for the perceived decline in the core theatre audience is the change in public taste brought about by the 'Event'.

In the market place, the demand is for novelty and spectacle -the special event. This is a phenomenon that has destroyed play-going in America and Britain and threatens to do the same here.

The theatre audience, others argue, is no longer predictable which, one of those interviewed suggests, is a reflection of the

many fractures that have opened up in what has been to now a pretty homogeneous society. There are deep divisions opening up along class lines, urban rural divisions. You name it! What we find here, for instance, is that, increasingly, we are playing to many different constituencies. Every play finds its own constituency. It's quite extraordinary.

However, although it is possible to predict the audience a particular production will appeal to, it is another matter to persuade that audience to attend.

The forecast is usually pretty bleak. You hope that you can interest people and you're trying to second guess all the time.

Each production is unique and very different, so it is very difficult to predict whether a particular production will be successful or not

Each play presented is a completely different production... You live from play to play. You go into previews and you know instantly the level of interest and you fight your way through previews. You target and you market and you push. You may get good review and still they are not coming, even to the classic plays.

Audiences, it is argued, can, however, be developed: play speaks to play and people's knowledge of theatre expands with attendance. The difficulty is getting them in there in the first place.

There are all kinds of ways you try... You can try and balance the seasons so that there are one or two plays in there that will draw people but these are getting more and more scarce because they have all been exploited by everyone else as well... You have a very important cultural task which is about giving people the opportunity to see these works because work speaks to work. You can take this

play on its own and that's fine but if you know this play has a relationship to this play, that play and the other play, there is richness in theatre. Theatre language begins to open up. You can make references. There is a resonance there, a deepening. People become more skilled in reading the signs, in hearing the words, in making connections. They become more adept in their imagining and, therefore, their experience of theatre is deepened.

A number of those interviewed argue for more market research and audience development

The Irish people like to get out. This an advantage to Irish theatre. People still think that they need to dress up for the theatre. The theatre is still seen as an elitist form of entertainment. We need to let people know what happens in the theatre and we need to encourage them to drop in.

We must encourage young people to come to the theatre. We must find out what they would like to see.

The quality of theatre which people see when they are young is key to encouraging an interest.

SECTION SEVEN

THE NATIONAL THEATRE SOCIETY

The National Theatre Society is a venue-based production company, established in 1904, which encompasses the Abbey and Peacock Theatres. It is a company limited by shares, owned by its shareholders and managed by a Board of Directors. Its employment structure and financial position has already been described in Section One of this Report. In this section the Society is considered in terms of its remit and of its national role and its role within the sector.

The Society describes its remit in the following terms:

- The promotion and development of new Irish plays to create an Irish School of Dramatic Literature
- The guardianship of the Irish Repertoire through the re-animation of the works of the Irish School of Dramatic Literature
- The enrichment of the repertoire through the presentation of masterworks of world theatre
- To be the guarantor of continuity and vitality in the Irish theatre through the employment, promotion, training and development of Irish theatre, artists and practitioners.

The issue of the remit - in so far as it is an issue - can be summed up in the two questions posed in the Society's own statement of needs for 1995:

Is the remit relevant in late 20th century Ireland?

If it is relevant, is it best effected through the National Theatre Society?

The Society's answer to these questions is "yes" to both

The Society...is the guarantor of the survival of the theatre art in Ireland. It cannot be stated too often that the continuity of the Society and its long-term commitment to theatre artists and practitioners makes it an invaluable resource for the Irish theatre in general. (NTS 2:13)

Any counter-argument that the remit is effectively covered by an amalgam of theatres which not only provide all the necessary outlets for works of drama and for touring but which cost considerably less, is rejected:

The Society is... the defining organisation for theatre in Ireland, still the market leader in every aspect of the business, including pay scales. (NTS 2:14).

and

...it is far from obvious that [these new companies] could have absorbed the amount

of work put out by the Society in opening up [new areas of repertoire and new Irish writing talent]... nor could they have supported the Society's roster of properly paid jobs (NTS 2: 13).

The Society continues to see itself as having a dual role with specific responsibilities to the artform as well as to the nation.

The present danger for the Society is that it is caught between the responsibilities placed on it by the aesthetic or Abbey remit and the exigencies of its national remit, all the while being forced by the continual erosion of its subsidy to survive in the market-place (NTS 2: 8).

The difficulty of its position, the Society believes is exacerbated by significant external changes, including:

- The greatest proliferation of the performing arts ever seen in Ireland. Small theatre groups [which pose a] new challenge to the Society in those very areas in which it has traditionally held itself to be most proficient (NTS 2:10).
- The founding of the Arts Council and the 'recent shift from benign statism to the values of a market-led economy which has struck at the very basis upon which the society was restructured and resourced thirty years ago' (NTS 2:10)
- Arts Council policy - identifiable since 1983 - 'has without doubt contributed heavily to the present crisis' (NTS2:17)
- The positive discrimination by the funding body [Arts Council] towards regional and community groups which has become a dominant feature of the Irish arts. (NTS 2:10)
- The boom in home entertainment and in Irish cinema (NTS 2:10).
- Cultural disorientation arising from radical changes in politics and philosophy (NTS 2:10)

The Society sees itself as resting on three pillars - its remit, its structure and its funding. The first is intact, the second is in hand but the third is in crisis. Parallel to this crisis, the society has two major liabilities - its building and its deficit.

Perceptions of the National Theatre Society

In addition to the environmental and internal difficulties facing the Society, it also views itself as being the target of unjustified criticism

As one of the major institutions of the nation - almost a microcosm - the National Theatre Society must accept the buffeting from the cultural and psychic storms in the country as a whole, but there is no doubt that our work has been made difficult by the current, somewhat mystifying climate of mistrust, dislike and begrudgery (NTS 2:10-11).

This mistrust, dislike and begrudgery is not, by and large, reflected in the views of those theatre practitioners interviewed for this review nor by those surveyed.

The Theatre practitioners surveyed expressed their views on six items on the National Theatre Society. The views expressed were, generally, positive, particularly as far as the Society's remit in preserving the repertoire of Irish work and standards of design and production were concerned. For both these items, over 80% of respondents thought that the performance of the society was adequate, good or excellent. Nurturing of new writing was also positively regarded by over 60% of all respondents.

Attitudes towards the presentation of non-Irish work were somewhat less positive. Forty-four per cent regarded the Society's performance in this area as poor.

Given the Society's own views on the importance of its role as employer and also given the fact that (i) it is the biggest employer and (ii), that it pays the highest average wage of all those surveyed (See Section One), it is interesting to note that only 41 % of respondents said that the employment opportunities offered were adequate or better than adequate and 38% thought they were poor.

The lowest level of satisfaction was with the Society's interaction with the rest of the theatre sector in Ireland. Eighty-one per cent of all respondents thought this was poor and none thought it excellent. This is further discussed later in the section.

TABLE 7.1 Attitudes to The Current Status of Different Aspects of Irish Theatre

Attitude item	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't Know/ Incomplete
Information					
National Theatre Society					
Nurturing of new writing/writers	7	29	26	21	17
Preserving repertoire of Irish work	7	33	43	4	13
Presentation of non-Irish work	-	6	39	44	11
Design/production standards	19	46	17	4	14
Employment opportunities offered	1	11	29	38	21
Interaction with overall Irish theatre sector	-	1	8	81	10

Note: In interpreting the responses to the items on the National Theatre Society, the high rate of non-response should be borne in mind.

The Need for and Value of a National Theatre

The findings from the survey reflect the generally very positive views expressed by many of the key informants This is true particularly in terms of its role as the National Theatre which is regarded as

...a necessity for the country as a centre of excellence.

The Abbey is a fine institution and does good work. The work is big in scale with a bias in favour of traditional and new Irish writing with some work from overseas. It is a place where you see the finest actors and the finest production values...

In the National Theatre, one expects to hear about Ireland

There is some wonderful work at the smaller end of the scale but the Abbey should be regarded as a thing apart like the National Gallery or the National Library i.e. as a part of the established culture of the country.

Some have more mixed views

The Abbey is reproducing a typical national theatre and reproducing a class differential. The question is whether or not you have a national theatre. It is not a home theatre: it is a figure head for the rest of the world. As a place for the people, it is like a museum. Theatre practitioners need access to a theatre with all the facilities and scale necessary for professional development and where commercial considerations are not foremost.

Others commented favourably on the number of productions it puts on each year.

One of those interviewed expressed the view that the Society is overly concerned with established writers and their work.

There is too much emphasis on the writer as the centre of theatre. The Abbey should consider the 'devising process' and be prepared to experiment more.

The Artistic Director presents the National Theatre Society point of view.

Both historically and at the present time, this theatre has a speciality and that speciality is in the areas of the plays/play writing and the presentation of a classic repertoire - not just an Irish, but an international repertoire. It also has a commitment to Irish writing. This speciality is, therefore, in mainstream text-based productions, not experimental or devised pieces. The last ten years have, however seen a broadening of the spectrum that is mainstream theatre.

The form of theatre the National Theatre specialises in has both artistic and financial implications. It's very labour intensive. It's very talent intensive and it's very technique intensive. You have to invest not just in materials but in training people in certain disciplines, certain techniques. That is something which imposes its own kind of rigours so we have a very special role quite apart from any national responsibilities.

Level of support to the National Theatre Society

The National Theatre Society, as the National Theatre, is the biggest beneficiary of public subsidy in the theatre sector. Currently, it receives £2,433m (£2,226m for running costs and £207,000 as a discretionary grant for touring in 1995) which represents 44 % of the total available funding for Theatre in the Arts Council budget for 1995.

The Society itself is extremely dissatisfied with its level of funding. It argues first that the grant of the National Theatre Society Ltd as a percentage of the total arts funding declined from 39% of total funding to the arts in 1976 to 15% of total Arts Council funding in 1994 (the same percentage for 1995) and that, overall, increased funding for the Arts Council has not resulted in maintaining the Society's percentage. (NTS: 26-27). Second, the ratio of the Society's grant to earned income has decreased from 68:32 in 1976 to 54:46 in 1993. The Arts Council requirement that it be furthered lowered to 50:50 '*would have a devastating effect on the future viability of the Society*'. (NTS 2: 27) Third, in relation to the funding of the capital requirement, it is contended that at the time of the construction of the premises, procedures were not established between the Society and the Dept of Finance to address the upkeep of the premises and provision for the replacement of assets. In 1978, a programme of asset replacement was agreed in principle by the Arts Council but, due to a lack of funding, the Arts Council was not in a position to continually finance the capital programme..... (NTS 2: 28-29).

The dominant theme of key informants' criticisms of the Society in relation to its funding refers, not to its level of funding, but to what it does with it, particularly in relation to touring, although reference to training was also mentioned. A small number of those interviewed did, however, believe that the Society was 'getting too much of a limited cake', and one believed that the level of subvention allowed the Society an unfair advantage in competing for the best human resources. The inclusion of the National Theatre Society in theatre subsidy statistics is also regarded as a distortion of the actual state of affairs.

Touring Policy and Practice

Of the 80 productions staged by the National Theatre society in the past five years. 24 (30%) have toured, representing circa 10% of all toured productions. The discretionary grant of £207,000 has enabled the society in 1995 to tour five productions for a total of fifteen weeks.

Nonetheless, many key informants hold the view that the National Theatre Society should tour more, while a small number go further and believe that funding for the society should be conditional on touring. Others recognise that cost to venues is an important factor.

The Society itself would wish to tour more frequently but contends that it is constrained from doing so by lack of funds, particularly in view of its commitment to maintaining high production values and the working conditions which it offers its staff.

(Regional venues)... do not have the seating capacity to cover the combination of their own costs and production running costs. The consequence of this is that touring is totally dependent on the provision of funding (NTS 2: 36)

The Society argues that it is unable to absorb the wage bill of the touring cast. The venues cannot either and they therefore cannot take the plays they would like.

The Society suggests that:

It is the cost of the Dublin operation - Abbey and Peacock - with two shows in performance and two shows in rehearsal for 12 months of the year that makes the cost of touring impossible without such discretionary grants as we received in 1995, (Artistic director)

Supplementary monies could be made available to the venue, or the Society - or both - to allow a proper level of per diems to be paid to the cast and crew of a touring show. But, until this problem is addressed, the touring operation of the society will be severely circumscribed and its role as a theatre for the nation compromised (NTS 2: 20).

The Audience

The National Theatre Society employs a person with specific responsibility for both marketing and promotion. While currently they do not have a marketing plan, one is being developed to cover a three-year period and will cover issues of pricing strategy, repertoire strategy, advertising and promotion and touring.

Commissioned market research is also undertaken on an irregular basis, covering issues of facilities/venues, audience profile and patterns of attendance.

The National Theatre Society's artistic director outlines his views on the role of the theatre in relation to the audience as follows:

The purpose of the society is to challenge and mould the market - not necessarily to 'just give the people what they want'.... That has always been the role of this theatre. It was one of the reasons why the theatre was founded..... It is constantly opening doors, opening windows by putting on productions, not just from the Irish repertoire but from the international repertoire too, to give the theatre audience a more extensive and a more sophisticated vocabulary.

There is a sizeable level of support for the Society and its work among the theatre-going public. More than forty per cent (43%) of frequent play attenders put funding for "National organisations and events such as the Abbey, Galway Arts Festival, Wexford Festival of Opera, Siamsa Tire" as their first priority, compared to 18% of the general public (The Public and the Arts, 1994).

The National Theatre Society is itself concerned with the level of attendance at its productions.

Whereas in the past, even the recent past, the existence of a core theatre-going audience of some numbers could be assumed, it can be taken for granted no longer. We are currently faced with the disappearance of that core audience. We take little comfort from the fact that we are not alone. Theatre in Dublin would seem to be in crisis. (Artistic Director)

Interaction of National Theatre Society with overall Irish Theatre Sector

Of all the aspects of Irish theatre reviewed in the survey, the interaction between the National Theatre Society and the rest of the sector elicited the most negative response. Eighty-one per cent thought this was poor, 8% said it was adequate and only 1 % said it was good. The various facets of this interaction are spelt out in more detail by the key informants.

Nurturing of creative talent

An issue of concern to some of those interviewed was a sense that, with some exceptions, younger directors were not getting an opportunity to develop their craft and their talent in the big scale and that the Society, in particular, had an obligation in this regard.

A more fundamental criticism of one interviewee is that, while some new directors who work in experimental and innovative ways in the smaller production companies gain access to the larger spaces, in many ways they are constrained to work in the traditional modes of those spaces.

A related criticism was that the Society's personnel did not travel to see work which was going on in smaller companies. In this regard one respondent accuses the Society of being 'remarkably introspective'.

Accessibility

A number of interviewees are critical of the society for its level of accessibility in view of its role as the 'National' theatre. As such, it is argued it should be nationally accessible: it should reach out to the regions by touring more, engaging in co-productions, circulating its scripts etc. It is further suggested that its role regarding its training mandate also needs to be revisited as does its marketing capacity. These views are summarised in a CADC document.

It is widely believed that the Abbey needs to define its national role and its relationship to the country at large. This would be best achieved by entering into dialogues with the production companies and venues in the regions who could advise on greater cooperation in areas such as script development and out of town openings. There would be a two-way flow of product and personnel if more co-productions were undertaken and if the Peacock were more accessible.

The question of the Society's relationship with the rest of the sector is addressed by the Society itself and many of these criticisms are rejected:

The Society is interested and involved in discussions about co-productions.

The Society does regard the facilitation and development of new talent as a 'main function of the National Theatre. It also regards itself as having

a strong formal and informal relationship with individual talent. (Artistic Director)

The Society supports other companies in various ways. It provides a great deal of material help and technical help.

Education and Community work are given as two major artistic initiatives for 1996/97 as well as the Abbey's Outreach Programme. There are, however, limits to the contacts that the National Theatre can have with community and amateur theatre.

We have always helped out many of the people associated with the Theatre, including amateur groups. We have been adjudicators, teachers and animateurs. But amateur theatre often has a different aim from the professional theatre. It is sometimes more interested in the social and competitive rather than the aesthetic. (Artistic Director).

ADDENDUM

Readers are referred to the National Theatre Society's latest policy document entitled 'The National Theatre' which became available too late for consideration in this report

SECTION EIGHT

THE ARTS COUNCIL

The Arts Council is the body charged with the overall responsibility for the arts in Ireland. In its mission statement the tenth Arts Council identified its responsibilities broadly as follows:

the stimulation of public interest in the arts and the promotion of their knowledge, appreciation and practice;

the encouragement and maintenance of high standards;

the fostering of structures which assist and develop dialogue between artists, the arts and the communities from which they emerge.

In 'The Arts Plan 1993-1997' the Council sets itself a comprehensive brief in relation to the theatre sector, taking responsibility, inter alia, for the fostering of quality in theatre; the facilitation of innovation and creativity through experimentation; facilitation of improved access to theatre with specific reference to touring, venue provision and training of theatre practitioners as well as for specialist areas including Theatre in Education.

The principal mechanisms for the implementation of its remit which are available to the Arts Council are the allocation and administration of grant-aid; dialogue with its constituency; the development of policy; and its subsequent role as advocate for these policies.

The present research findings indicate a strong level of concern about and criticism of the way in which the Arts Council manages the balance between these different functions. These fall into the following categories: the Council's effectiveness as a development agency for theatre in Ireland; the transparency and communication of its decision-making process; centralisation and the relationship between the Arts Council and other grant giving bodies e.g. Local Authorities, Temple Bar Properties; the efficiency and effectiveness of its structure and composition.

An issue of central concern is that of funding. This, as well as another area of particular concern - touring - is dealt with separately in Section Three and Section Five dealing with funding and with touring respectively.

Attitudes of Theatre Practitioners

Survey respondents were asked to comment on Arts Council policy and practice in relation to four separate items. The four items, on the whole, drew negative responses. Two of these items related to the clarity of the Arts Council funding policy and the appropriateness of its funding practice. As noted above, this issue is discussed in detail in Section Three of the Report.

The two remaining items deal with perceptions of Arts Council interaction with the theatre community. Table 8.1 shows that satisfaction with the level of attendance of Arts Council personnel at arts events is low with 62% of all respondents defining this as poor.

The perceptions concerning the level of contact between theatre practitioners and Arts Council personnel were much more positive. Six per cent saw this as excellent, while 25% and 26% saw it as good and adequate, respectively. Slightly more than a third (37%) saw this as poor.

TABLE 8.1 Perceptions of Theatre Practitioners on Aspects of Arts Council Policy and Practice

Attitude item	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't Know/ incomplete Information
Clarity of Funding Policy	-	10	17	70	3
Appropriateness of Funding Practice	-	6	29	56	9
Level of Attendance of Arts Council personnel at events	-	7	28	62	3
Level of contact between theatre practitioners and Arts Council officers	6	25	26	37	6

The Council presents its perspective on the role of both officers and members of the Council and also its record on attendance at relevant theatre events. The Arts Council operates at two levels. The paid officers are responsible for attending events and board meetings, meeting clients and potential clients, assessing grant applications and recommending to the Council so that it can arrive at informed decisions at its monthly meetings.

One officer has responsibility for the entire drama remit including the National Theatre Society, regional theatre, production companies, venues, and touring including relevant elements of North/South touring. Furthermore, there has been a steady growth in the workload of that officer since 1985, corresponding to the growth in activity in the sector. This growth is illustrated in Figure 8.1

FIGURE 8.1 Growth in Responsibilities of Arts Council Drama Officer from 1985 -1994

Area of Responsibility	1985	1994
Grants/Award to individuals	2	132
Revenue Clients	15	30
Venues	3	14
Tours by Companies	9	10
Theatre Projects	4	8
Local Authorities	-	7
Playwright Commissions	-	13
Sundry Awards	1	4

The Council has an entire staff of 27 to manage a budget of £16.25m. These figures bear comparison with the Arts Councils, of Wales, which has a budget of £14.5m. and a staff of 70, of Northern Ireland which has a budget of £6.6m and 40 staff and of Scotland which has a budget of £24.5m and a staff of 60.

There are seventeen Council Members. These are voluntary citizens, appointed by the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht. Their function is to determine policy, ensure that the Council operates within the budget set by Government, and, advised by the appropriate officers of the Council, to determine the level of grant-aid to applicant organisations and individuals. Within the constraints of a voluntary and part-time commitment, members undertake to attend as many arts events as possible during their five years of appointment. Apart from the monthly meetings of the full Council, members are also required to attend sub-committee meetings dealing with specific disciplines or key policy issues. Considerable travel is undertaken by all members and officers.

The Arts Council points out that its members and officers will often attend events in addition to those to which they have been specifically invited. The current Drama Officer's travel log indicates that he has attended over 90% of all of the 522 productions presented by professional theatre companies in the Republic of Ireland since 1990, in addition to further travel to performances in Northern Ireland and to youth theatre performances.

The Arts Council's effectiveness as a development agency for theatre in Ireland

From the interviews with key informants, a repeated criticism of the Arts Council refers to its narrow interpretation of its functions - a fault that is attributed to different causes by different respondents ranging from an over concentration on the administration of funds to the lack of sufficient personnel.

The Arts Council needs to.... be a sounding board or to be a proactive developer. At the moment it is too 'clérentelisf' - responding to factors other than art i.e. geographical priorities and political interferences.

A development officer is required who is capable of proactively developing the sector and initiating new ideas and initiatives.

One man simply cannot do it all.

An associated area of concern is the perception of some that the Arts Council has neglected other theatre forms such as movement, mime, visual, and physically-based theatre

Communication between the Arts Council and its constituency

A commonly held view of those interviewed, reflecting the findings from the survey, is that there is insufficient contact between theatre practitioners and Arts Council personnel, and also that there is insufficient explanation of the rationale behind its decisions.

This present review is an excellent idea but there should be more on-going

communication between the theatrical community and the Arts Council. There tends to be a culture of secrecy in Ireland. Keep people in the dark as much as possible. The Arts Council should be made to answer for the decisions they make.

There is also a view that the Arts Council needs to act as a mediator between the different aspects of theatre.

The Council, which publishes all of its grant aid decisions within two months of taking these decisions, acknowledges that, by and large it has not, in the past given reasons for its decisions and that this practice has caused dissatisfaction.

The Arts Council as advocate for the arts

This function of the Council is also singled out for criticism.

/ think the biggest failure of the Arts Council has been that it has failed, over the years, to lobby for more money for the Arts.

The Council, however, defends its record and outlines its role as advocate for increased funding. While the Arts Council is appointed by Government and therefore, does not by its nature engage in political lobbying, it constantly advocates and makes the case for increased funding in its representations to government, through publications, the media and at seminars.

The current Arts Council, working closely with the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, has seen an increase in the level of funding from £11.55m in 1992 to £16.25m in 1995. The Council prepared the Arts Plan 1995 - 1997. This Plan, which has been approved by Government, seeks a doubling of Government subsidy to the arts between 1994 and 1997.

Arts Council's relationships with other institutions

In its submission to the Arts Plan, Temple Bar Properties, commenting on the relationship between the Arts Council and other institutions, suggests that the development of partnerships and other modes of cooperation would be a way of extending Arts Council influence:

Such partnerships should take the form of an agreed, shared strategy at the macro level of cultural industry development, with a negotiated plan for the achievement of incremental targets within the context of these overall objectives.

Others concerned with theatre-in-education advocate a stronger relationship between the Arts Council and the Department of Education.

However, there are some suggestions that imply that the Arts Council is not the only agency with responsibility to the sector. For example, it is suggested that any Drama Council which might be considered in the future should also have responsibility for the amateur sector and one respondent, expressing concern about venue development, stresses the

role of the Local Authorities.

While the Arts Council have a role in the development of venue management, much of it has to be delivered on the ground. There is a role for Local Authorities.

Structure and composition of the Arts Council

Deficiencies in the functioning of the Arts Council are attributed to structural factors and the composition of the Council.

The comprehensive review initiated by the Council in 1992 is a timely recognition of the need for the Council to look at its own structures and policies. It is believed that the Council should re-examine its method of appointment, its centralised administration and its consultative process (CADC, Report to the Arts Council).

Many of those interviewed were critical of the structure of the Arts Council. There was a concern that crucial decisions in relation to the funding of production companies and venues were being taken at central level by people who, in the main, were not theatre practitioners or did not have specific competence in relation to theatre, and by people who, for reasons of time or other constraints, had not seen the work of the companies and individuals on whom they were making a judgement.

Other concerns are the composition of the Council and a Dublin bias. This latter issue was addressed in Section Three in the sub-section dealing with proliferation and rationalisation of theatre organisations.

While the method of appointment to the Council is a matter for the Minister responsible, the Council points out that, in selecting members to the Council, the Minister of the day will always face the question of whether to appoint persons with excellent working knowledge of the sector (and, as a consequence, almost inevitably with interests in it) or to select distinguished persons from outside the arts sector who may be less likely to understand the complexities and day-to-day realities of the sector. The usual solution is to have a mix of both. The Council has built-in safeguards to avoid any abuse of the system. Members declare their interests and are required to absent themselves when decisions affecting their interests are voted upon. This current Council has introduced a further public guarantee of propriety in publishing in the Art Matters publication, all declarations of interest that were made by its members.

Several respondents suggest that the Arts Council could be reorganised - by setting up regional councils and/or by forming a Drama/Theatre Council.

Regional Arts Councils should be set up and a regional fund established to be used in a more creative way to stimulate the development of arts in the regions

A Theatre Council is needed.

There is also a call for greater attention to be paid to developments internationally. It is argued by some respondents that there is not

enough exposure to external influences for example, developments in dance, theatre and multi-media. Festivals only partially meet these needs.

One prescription for the Arts Council summarises the views of many on the actions which need to be taken by the Council if it is to address many of the above issues The Council, it is argued, needs to embark on an overhaul that would involve:

clearly setting out its policy for funding;

making clients more accountable for their actions - /c. by tying funding to 'deliverable goals';

setting up a formal client appraisal process, with active communication and feedback;

introducing three year rolling plans with funding allocated on the same basis.

APPENDIX I**LIST OF COMPANIES****PRODUCTION COMPANIES**

Amharclann de hÍde
Barabbas.-.The Company
Barnstorm Theatre Company
Bedrock Theatre Company
Beg Borrow & Steal Theatre Company
Bickerstaffe Theatre Company
Blackbox Theatre Company
Blue Raincoat Theatre Company
(Factory Performance Space)
Calypso Productions
Co-Motion Theatre Company
Corcadorca Theatre Company
Dandelion Puppet Theatre
Down to Earth
Druid Theatre Company
Fly by Night
Focus Theatre Company
Galloglass Theatre Company
Galloping Cat
Gate Theatre
Glasshouse Productions
Gorey Little Theatre
Graffiti Theatre Company
Iomhna Ildanach (Crypt Arts Centre)
Island Theatre Company
Lambert Puppet Company
Level 3
Macnas
Meridan Theatre Company
Muted Cupid
National Theatre Society Ltd
Pan Pan Theatre Company
Passion Machine
Pigsback Theatre Company
Pink Panda Theatre Company
Playcirde
Playwrights & Actors Company
Punchbag Theatre Company
Red Kettle Theatre Company
Rough Magic Theatre
Second Age Limited
Smashing Times
Storytellers Theatre Company
TEAM Theatre Company
The Machine
Theatre Omnibus
Theatre Works
Very Special Arts
Wet Paint Theatre
Wildcard Theatre Company

RECEIVING VENUES

Abbey Centre
Andrew's Lane Theatre
Bog Lane Theatre
Bridewell Lane Theatre
C.A.T. Club
Cleer's Theatre
Cork Opera House
Dundalk Town Hall
Everyman Palace
Firkin Crane Centre
Gaiety Theatre (Ground Production)
Garage Theatre
Gorey Little Theatre
Olympia Theatre
Samuel Beckett Theatre
Taibhdhearc na Gaillimhe
Theatre Royal Waterford
Tivoli Theatre
Watergate Theatre Company

ARTS CENTRES

Belltable Arts Centre
City Arts Centre
Galway Arts Centre
Garter Lane Arts Centre
Hawks Well Arts Centre
Linenhall Arts Centre
Project Arts Centre
St John's Arts And Heritage Centre
Siamsa Tire Arts Centre
Triskel Arts Centre
Wexford Arts Centre
Yew Theatre Company

APPENDIX II

LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

Gerry Barnes
Cork Opera House

Sebastian Barry
Playwright

Siobhan Bourke
Rough Magic

Robert Carrickford
Irish Actors Equity

Annette Clancy
Garter Lane Arts Centre

Michael Colgan ,
Gate Theatre

Mary Coil
Belltable Arts Centre

Richard Cook
Bickerstaffe Theatre Company

Olwen Fouere
Freelance Actor

Johnny Hanrahan
Meridian Theatre Company

Susie Kennedy
TEAM Theatre Company

Kathy MacArdle
National Association of Youth Drama

Larry McCluskey
Co, Monaghan, VEC

Fiach MacConghail
Project Arts Centre

Patrick Mason
National Theatre Society

Sue Richardson
CAFE

Chrissie Poulter
Samuel Beckett Centre, TCD
Member of Arts Council, N. Ireland.

Ronan Smith
Gaiety Theatre

Marie Tierney
*Freelance Production Manager
and Costume Designer*

Paddy Woodworth
Arts Editor, Irish Times

TABLE A 1 Attitudes to The Current Status of Different Aspects of Irish Theatre

Attitude Item	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Don't know/Incomplete Information
Current Skill-base for Theatre in Ireland					
Standards of writing in theatre 8		58	25	4	4
Standards of directing in theatre 4		56	33	3	4
Standards of acting in theatre 18		61	14	4	3
Standards of production In theatre 6		44	37	10	3
Standards of marketing in theatre		15	33	46	6
Standards of management in theatre 3		29	39	19	9
Standards of criticism in theatre		14	21	57	8
Production companies					
Standards of design & Production 8		40	32	15	4
Originality of work presented 4		36	32	24	3
Venues					
Quality of physical spaces in Dublin 1		26	29	36	7
Quality of physical spaces outside Dublin 3		26	39	26	6
Accessibility/availability of spaces in Dublin to production companies.		3	19	56	22
Accessibility/availability of spaces out-side Dublin to production companies 5		35	35	14	11
Touring					
Quality of Toured Productions 1		25	43	26	4
Sector Cohesion					
Level of interaction/contact between the different areas of theatre i.e. professional, amateur, community, TIE -		4	6	86	4
Audience					
Level of public interest in and knowledge of Irish theatre 3		15	35	47	-

National Theatre Society

Nurturing of new writing/writers 7	29	26	21	7
Preserving repertoire of Irish work 7	33	43	4	13
Presentation of non-Irish work	6	39	44	11
Design/production standards 19	46	17	4	14
Employment opportunities offered 1	11	29	38	21
Interaction with overall Irish theatre sector -	1	8	81	10

Arts Council

Clarity of Funding Policy	10	17	70	3
Appropriateness of Funding Practice	6	29	56	9
Level of Attendance or Arts Council personnel at events	7	28	62	3
Level of contact between theatre practitioners and Arts Council officers 6	25	26	37	6

TABLE A2 Attitudes to Irish Theatre

Attitude item	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
There has been more progress than decline in Irish Theatre in the past decade	19	54	8	14	4
Any problems in Irish Theatre are primarily caused by inadequate funding	21	41	4	28	6
There is an over-emphasis on new Irish writing to the detriment of the existing repertoire including classic and foreign work and new forms of theatre	15	12	11	51	10
The development of film in Ireland has been a positive one for the development of theatre	8	40	11	32	8
Irish theatre is heavily dependent on the existence of a 'hidden subsidy' (i.e.) theatre practitioners working for long hours for very little money	79	21	–	–	–
There should be fewer production companies receiving a more substantive share of the available funding based on clear and transparent criteria.	19	22	–	38	21
The quality of toured production is very variable	39	46	7	7	1
There is too small a proportion of professional compared with amateur productions available to audiences					

in the regions outside Dublin.	42	36	10	10	2
There is a need for an independent body to represent all interests in theatre in Ireland	39	34	17	7	3
The Arts Council criteria for funding theatre/ drama are unclear and/ or in adequate	47	44	–	7	1
The criteria for allocating funding to theatre is overly determine by geographic location.	35	37	8	17	3

Aspects of Irish Theatre	SCALE OF IMPORTANCE				
	5	4	3	2	1
Innovative and experimental forms in the Theatre (including the work of new directors)	40	25	23	6	6
Touring of professional Irish theatre productions in Ireland	38	26	25	8	3
Touring of professional Irish theatre production abroad	19	25	37	10	8
The work of new emerging writers	32	36	22	8	1
Emerging new professional companies	25	25	33	8	7
Sustaining the work of the National Theatre Society	8	28	35	14	12
Consolidation of the work of established companies with a proven track record	47	28	17	7	-
Companies and productions dedicated to specialised interests; for e.g. women, disabled; youth; Irish Language	18	21	24	22	14
Festivals presenting International and Irish work	26	22	31	15	6
Employment conditions, including wages of theatre practitioners	50	32	11	3	4
Training of theatre practitioners	49	28	17	4	3
Audience development and marketing	50	35	10	0	6
Amateur theatre	7	18	31	24	21
Community theatre	21	18	31	18	12
Theatre for young people/ children	40	31	15	12	1
Theatre-in-Education	36	29	22	10	3
Capital investment in infrastructure	39	22	25	5	7
Foreign companies touring Ireland	21	24	28	17	11

TABLE A4 Categories of Staff for whom Experience/On-The-Job Training is Required by Organisation

(in Percentages)

Staff Category	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Incomplete Information
			<i>(does not employ this category)</i>	
General Manager	72	6	22	-
Executive Producer	50	10	40	-
Actors	71	8	21	-
Artistic Director	67	7	26	-
Design (set, costume, lighting)	71	4	25	-
Technical (lighting, sound)	78	7	15	-
Production/ Stage Management	75	10	15	-
Writers	39	26	33	1
Marketing/ Public Relations	75	6	19	-
Education/ Community/Outreach	47	6	44	3

TABLE A5 Categories of Staff for whom Formal Qualifications are Required by Organisation

(in percentages)

Staff Category	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Incomplete Information
			<i>(does not employ this category)</i>	
General Manager	25	53	22	-
Executive Producer	11	49	39	-
Actors	22	58	18	1
Artistic Director	25	50	25	-
Design (set, costume, lighting)	36	43	21	-
Technical (lighting, sound)	33	50	17	-
Production/ Stage Management	19	63	18	-
Writers	10	55	32	3
Marketing/ Public Relations	35	46	19	-
Education/ Community/Outreach	25	29	43	3

TABLE A6 Arts Council Funded Tours 1982 - 1992

Base of Touring Company	Percentages
Dublin	52
Cork	5
Galway	21
Waterford	2
Elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland	6
Northern Ireland	12
U.K.	2
TOTAL NUMBER	115

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Amharclann de hÍde	Tine Chnamh	Liam Ó Mulrthile	Michael Scott
	Ceacht Houdini	Michael Harding	Bairbre Ní
	Diin na mBan Trí Thine Mallachtal Mumtíre	Eilish Ní Dhuibhne Sean McCarthy	Kathv MacArdle Michael Scott
Andrew's Lane Theatre	The Odd Couple	Neil Simon	Kavin McHugh
	The Double Bass	Saskin	Maire Ó Higgins
	Once a Catholic	Marv O'Malley	Kevin McHugh
	Don't Dress for Dinner	Marc Camoletti	Terry O'Dea
Barabbas The Company	Come Down From the Mountain John Clown, John Half Eight Mass of a Tuesday Macbeth	Barabbas The Company Barabbas The William Shakespeare	Barabbas The Company Barabbas The Gerard Stembndge
	Agnes of God	John Pielmieir	Philip Hardy
Barnstorm Theatre Company	Crimes of the Heart	Both Henlev	Philip Hardy
	Translations	Brian Fnel	Philip Hardy
	One, Two, Three Ó Leary	Volker Ludwig	Philip Hardy
	How the Other Half Loves	Alan Avckbourne	Philip Hardy
	She Stoops to Conquer	Oliver Goldsmith	Rosalind Hickson
	Wild Harvest	Ken Bourke	Vincent Dempsey
Bedrock Theatre Company	East	Steven Berkoff	Jimmy Fay
	The Clothing Play	Dano Fo Adanted	Jimmv Fav
	Weslev Crusher Ate mv	Various	Jimmv Fav
	Doctor Faustus	Christopher Marlow	Jimmv Fav
	Saved	Edward Bond	Jimmv Fav
	Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love	Brad Fraser	Jimmy Fay
Beg Borrow & Steal Theatre	Finders Keepers	Margaret Biggs	Margaret Biggs
	Billy Bathtubs Davdreams	Margaret Biggs S	Margaret Biggs
	Billion Trillion Land	Margaret Biggs	Margaret Biggs
	High Rise Surprise	Fergus Fav	Margaret Biggs
	City on the Move	Paul Maher &	Paul Maher
	Bullys Acre	Margaret Biggs	Margaret Biggs
Bickerstaffe Theatre Company	The Gingerbread Mix-up	Martin Murphy	David Pamell
	Long Black Coat	John Waters	David Bvrne
	Macbeth	William	Conall Mornson
	True Lines	Devised by Director	John Crowlev
	The Woman Who Cooked Snow	Debbie Isset Michael West	Brian Hardv Michael West
	Isaac Bickerstaffe's Hvsterical To	Devised by Cast & Jim Cartwnght	Conall Mornson Brian Bradv
	Franklv. Mv Dear	Martin Murphv	Conall Mornson
	The Factory Girls	Frank McGuinness	Richard Cook
Blackbox Theatre Company	Without the'H'	Sean Moffatt	John Breen
	Scorpion	Eugene Ó Bnen &	Rebecca Roper

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Blue Raincoat Theatre Company	Double Cross	Thomas Kilroy	Niall Hemy
	Loot	Joe Orton	Niall Henry
	Euuus	Peter Sheerer	Niall Henry
	Revenge of Skinny Spoon		Darina Gallagher
	The Cat & The Moon	WB Yeats	Niall Henry
	Purgatory	WB Yeats	Niall Henry
	Accidental Death of an	Dario Fo	Niall Henry
	Scrooge	Charles Dickens	Niall Henry
	The Open Couple	Dario Fo	Niall Henry
	On Baile's Strand	WB Yeats	Niall Henry
	At the Hawks Well	WB Yeats	Niall Henry
	Whistle in the Dark	Tom Murnohv	Niall Henry
	Bent	Martin Snennan	Niall Henry
	Zoo Story	Edward Albee	Niall Henry
	Playboy of the Western World	JM Synge	Niall Henry
	The Man with the Flower in	Luigi Pirandello	Niall Henry
	His Mouth		
Calypso Productions Ltd.	Hughie on the Wires	Donal O'Kelly	Kenneth Glenann
	Trickledown Town	Donal O'Kelly	Kenneth Glenann
Co-Motion Theatre Company	Sinking of the Titanic	Joe O'Byrne	Joe O'Byrne
	Cabaret/Kabarett	various	Joe O'Byrne
	Loco County Lonesome	Pat McCabe	Joe O'Byrne
	The Man in the Iron Mask	Joe O'Byrne	Rebecca Roper
	Frank Pig Says Hello	Pat McCabe	Joe O'Byrne
	The Tain	Devised by	Joe O'Byrne
	Vlad The Impaler	Marin Sorescu	Liam O'Neill
Corcadorca Theatre Company	Leonce & Lena	Georg Buchner	Pat Kieman
	Low in the Dark	Marina Carr	Terence White
	That Scoundrel Scorpion	Moliere	Pat Kieman
	Owl	Devised by	Terence White
	The Fire Raisers	Max Frisch	Cormac Sheridan
	The Man with the Flower in	Luigi Piradello	Pat Kieman
	Rave to Real	Devised by	Pat Kieman
	We Have your Little Man	Devised by	Pat Kieman
	Inside Out 1	Devised by	Pat Kieman
	Greek	Stephen Berkoff	Pat Kieman
	Panto!	Enda Walsh	Enda Walsh
	The Love of Don Perlimplin	Federica Garcia	Pat Kieman
	Inside Out 11	Devised by	Pat Kieman
	Christmas Carol	Adapted by Enda Walsh	Enda Walsh and Pat Kieman
Iomhú Ildánach	Ronn&TheBigMen	-(Devised)	Maire O Higgins
	Children of Lír	-(Devised)	Frank Maurer
	Clann Lír	-(Devised)	Cliona Maher &
	The Ouest	-(Devised!	John O'Brien
	Lunasa	-(Devised!	Cliona Maher
	Toraiocht Dhiarmada &	-(Devised)	Claire Finn &
	Cuchulainn: Laoch Uladh	-(Devised)	Cliona Maher &
	Wrath of Fionn	-(Devised)	Frank Maurer
	Toraiocht 11	: Niall 6 Sforadain	Maire O Higgins
	Single White Male	Niall 6 Storadain	John O'Brien
	Baal	Bertolt Brecht	Maire O'Higgins
Dandelion Puppet Theatre	Nothing But Trouble	Group	Group

The Black Book
Tutencamba's Treasure-

Arthur
Theresa Riney-

Arthur Watson
Arthw Watson

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Down to Earth	Down in the Dumps	Fergal M Elherron	Lynne Kmlon/Jim
Druid Theatre Company	St Patrick s Day	RB Sheridan	Jon Tarlton
	Antigone	Jean Anouilh	Martin Drurv
	The Donahue Sisters/Stanlev	Geraldine Aron	Barrv Hvnnes
	Lovers Meeting	Louis D Alton	Garrv Hvnnes
	The Increased Difficltv of	Vaclav Havel	Maeliosa Stafford
	Look Back in Anger	John Osborne	Maeliosa Stafford
	Cheapside	David Alien	Roland Jaquarello
	Shadow & Substance	Paula Vincent	Maeliosa Stafford
	John Hughdy and Tom John	Vincent Woods	John Crowley
	Carthaginians	Frank McGuinness	Frank
	Werewolves	Teresa Lubkiewicz	Helena Kaut
	Gaslight	Patrick Hamilton	Vanessa Fielding
	At the Black Pig s Dvke	Vincent Woods	Maeliosa Stafford
	Private Dick	Roger Michell &	Michael Scott
	Midnight Court	Brian Mernman	Maeliosa Stafford
	The Ointment Blue	George	M Stafford/John
	Belfrv	Billy Roche	Maeliosa Stafford
	Summerhouse	Robin Glendinnmg	Caroline
	Silverlands	Antoine O	Garrv Hvnnes
	Song of the Yellow Bittern	Vincent Woods	Maeliosa Stafford
Fly by Night	Radio Play	Conor McPherson	Conor
	Rum And Vodka	Conor McPherson	Colin O Connor
	Van Gogh's Ear	Colin O Connor	Colin O Connor
	The Light of Jesus	Conor McPherson	Conor
	A Light in the Window of	Conor McPherson	Conor
	The Stars Lose Their Glory	Conor McPherson	Conor McPherson
Galloglass Theatre Company	The Big Sea	Colin Teevan	Simon Bayley
	The Good Woman	Bertolt Brecht	Ben Twist
	Happy Days	Samuel Beckett	Colin Teevan
	Glass Menagerie	Tennessee Williams	James Bvrne
	Measure for Measure	William	Conall Momson
	Gullivers Travels	Jonathan Swift	Colin Teevan
	Alice in Wonderland	Lewis	Cliona Maher
	Bailegangaire	Tom Murphy	James Byrne
Gate Theatre	Aristocrats	Brian Fnel	Joe Dowlmg
	Three Sisters	A Chekhov/New	Adrian Noble
	Salome	Oscar Wilde	Steven Berkoff
	Michael Pennington as Anton	Michael	Michael
	Juno and the Pavcock	Sean O Casev	Joe Dowlmg
	You Never Can Tell	GB Shaw	John David
	The Bread Man	Frank McGuinness	Andy Hinds
	In High Germanv	Dermot Bolger	David Bvrne
	An Evening With Roger	Roger McGough	NA
	The Tramway End	Dermot Bolger	David Byrne
	Jane Evre	CBronte/ad	Helena Kaut-
	Our Countrv's Good	Timberlake	Joe Dowlmg
	Romeo & Juliet	William	Alan Stanford
	Seamus Heanev	' Seamus Heanev	NA
	The Threepennv Opera	Brecht/Weill/new	Patrick Mason
	Waiting for Godot	Samuel Beckett	Walter Asmus
	Come & Go/Act Without	Samuel Beckett	Lucv Bailev
	Krapps Last Tape	Samuel Beckett	Pat Laffan

Happy Days
Footfalls/Rough for Theatre
1/Rockaby

Samuel Beckett
Samuel Beckett

Caroline
Derek Chapman

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Gate Theatre	Not I/What Where/Act Without Words 1	Samuel Beckett	Colm O Bnain
	Endgame	Samuel Beckett	Antom Libera
	Ohio Impromptu/Rough for Breath/That Time/A Piece of	Samuel Beckett	Pierre Chabert
	The London Vertigo	Bnen Fnel	Judv Fnel
	Private Lives	Noel Coward	Judy Fnel
	The Cherry Orchard	Anton	Robin Lefevre
	A Month in the Countrv	Turgenev/new	Michael
	Tartuffe	Moliere/new	Joe Dowling
	The Juliet Letters	MacManus/E	Alan Stanford
	The Double Dealer	William Congreve	Philip King
	Just Between Ourselves	Alan Avckbourn	Jonathan Miller
	A Midsummer Night's Dream	William	John David
	A Doll's House	Hennk Ibsen (trans	Joe Dowling
	London Assurance	Dion Bouicault	Karel Reisz
	111 Go On	Samuel Beckett	Alan Strachan
	The Seagull	A Chekhov/a	Colm O Bnain
	Betraval	Harold Pinter	Lindsay Rosner
	The Dumb Waiter	Harold Pinter	Ben Barnes
	Old Times	Harold Pinter	Joe O'Bvme
	One for the Road	Harold Pinter	Kevin Billmpton
	Moonlight	Harold Pinter	John Crowlev
	Landscape	Harold Pinter	Karel Reisz
	Present Laughter	Noel Coward	Harold Pinter
Mollv Sweeney	Brian Fnel	Alan Stanford	
Oleanna	David Mamet	Brian Fnel	
Pride & Prejudice	Jane Austen/version by James Maxwell	Ben Barnes	
		Alan Stanford	
Glasshouse Productions	Vampirella and the Company of Wolves	Angela Carter (adapted by Katy)	Katy Hayes
	Fickv Stingers	Eve Lewis	Katv Haves
	Out of mv Head	Trudv Haves	Katv Haves
	There are no Irish Women	Devised Caroline	Katv Haves
	Low Level Panic	Claire McIntvre	Katv Haves
	Bums Both Ends	Clare Dowling	Katv Haves
	There are no Irish Women	Devised - Caroline	Katv Haves
	Leapfrogging	Clare Dowling	Katv Haves
1 Know my Own Heart	Emma Donoghue	Katy Hayes	
Graffiti Theatre Company	Control	Roger Gregg	Emelie Fitzgibbon
	Frank N'Stem	Ken Campbell	Emelie
	Dead Dad Dog	John McKay	Emelie
	Tears from a Long Time Ago	Martina Lvnch	Emelie
	Infidel	Roger Gregg	Emelie
	Your Can't Talk About that	Devised by Graffiti	Emelie
	The Dogs of Chulamn	Roger Gregg	Emelie
	Frog and Toad	Arnold Lobel	Emelie
	Fishv Tales	Enda Walsh	Emelie
	Control	Roger Gregg	Emelie
	Othello	William	Emelie
	Crossing the Boundary	Roger Gregg	Emelie Ficgibbon
Red Shoes	Tiziana Lucattim	Emelie	
The Happy Prince	Oscar Wilde	Emelie	
Groundwork Productions	The Shadow of a Gunman	Sean O'Casey	Fitzgibbon
			BenBames

The Risen People
Marv MakeBelieve
The Chastitute
The Man from Clare
Canaries

James Plunkett
Fergus
John B Keane
John B Keane
Bernard Farrell

Jim/Peter
Domv Reiter
Pat Laffan
Pat Laffan
Ben Bames

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Groundwork Productions	Equus	Peter Shaffer	John David
	Moll	JohnB Keane	Brian de Salvo
Island Theatre Company	The Year of the Hiker	JohnB Keane	Ben Barnes
	Woman in Mind	Alan Ayckbourn	Terry Devlin
	The Conquest of the South	Manfred Karge	Marv Elizabeth
	Home is the Hero	Walter Macken	Terrv Devlin
	She Stoops to Conquer	Oliver Goldsmith	Terrv Devlin
	The Colleen Bawn	Dion Boucicault	Terrv Devlin
	Northern Star	Stewart Parker	Terrv Devlin
	Biloxi Blues	Neil Simon	Jonathan Arak
	All My Husbands	George Feydeau	Terrv Devlin
	Translations	Brian Fnel	Terrv Devlin
	Arms and the Man	George Bernard	Terrv Devlin
	The Tempest	William	Terrv Devlin
	The Crunch	Mike Finn with	Paul Brennan
	Romeo and Juliet	William	Terrv Devlin
Good Morning, Bill	PGWodehouse	Terrv Devlin	
Lambert Puppet Theatre	Snow White	Conor Lambert/Brothers	Eugene Lambert
	Fisherman & His Soul	Oscar	Eugene Lambert
	Billy Goats Gruff	Eugene Lambert	Eugene Lambert
	Cinderella	Conor	Eugene Lambert
	Smbad	Conor Lambert/Adaptation	Eugene Lambert
Level3	Are You Lonesome Tonight	Alan Bleasdale	Seamus Moran
	Stags and Hens	Willie Russell	Seamus Moran
	The Ballad of Oscar Wilde	Wilde/Eagleton	Seamus Moran
	Desdemona (from Othello)	William Shakespeare	Kathy MacArdle
Macnas	Circus Story	Patricia Forde	Rod Goodall
	Alice in Wonderland	Paraic Breathnach	P
	Treasure Island	Paraic	Rod Goodall
	The 3 Vz Wonders	Littlejohn	Padraic
	EP Moran and the Fir Boigs	Rod Goodall/P	Rod Goodall
	Tain	Paraic Breathnach	Rod Goodall
Buile Shuibhne	Paranc Breathnach	Rod Goodall	
Meridian Theatre Company	Normal	Anthony Neilson	Johnny Hanrahan
	The Art of Waiting	Johnnv Hanrahan	Johnnv Hanrahan
	Adios Amigos	Johnnv Hanrahan	John Browne
	Professor Taranne	Arthur Adamov	John Browne
	Volpone	Johnny Hanrahan	John Browne & J
National Theatre Society Ltd	Castle Rackrent	Maria	J Browne & J
	i	l	
	Rumpelstiltskin	Kevin Lavin (based	Bnd 6 Gallachdir
	The Shaughraun '	Dion Boucicault	Garrv Hynes
	The Silver Tassie	Sean O Casev	Patrick Mason
	You Can't Take It With You	Kaufman/Hart	Joe Dowling
	Dancing at Lughnasa	Brian Fnel	Patrick Mason
	Big Maggie	JB Keane	Ben Barnes
	The Misogynist	Michael Harding	Judy Fnel
	English That For Me	Eamonn Kelly	
Faith Healer	Brian Fnel	Joe Dowling	
The Gigli Concert	Tom Murphy	Patrick Mason	

The Plough and the Stars
The Murphy Initiative
Hedda Gabler
The Power of Darkness
The Corsican Brothers

Sean O Casev
Niall Williams
Henk Ibsen
John McGahem
Dion Boucicault

Garry Hvnes
Paul Mercier
Dsborah Warner
Garry Hvnes
Ian Judge

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
National Theatre Society Ltd.	Conversations on a Homecoming	Tom Murphy	QanyHynes
	Moving	Hugh Leonard	Joe Dowling
	Drama at Inish	Lennox Robinson	Garry Hynes
	The Iceman Cometh	Eugene O'Neill	Robert Falls
	A Crucial Week in the Life of a Grocer's Assistant	Tom Murphy	Garry Hynes
	The Honey Spike	Bryan MacMahon	Francesco Zambello
	The Comedy of Errors	William Shakespeare	Gerard Stembridge
	Someone Who'll Watch Over Me	Frank McGuinness	Robin Lefevre
	The Last Apache Reunion	Bernard Farrell	Ben Barnes
	Wonderful Tennessee	Brian Friel	Patrick Mason
	Famine	Tom Murphy	Gany Hynes
	Sive	JB Keane	Ben Barnes
	The Bird Sanctuary	Frank McGuinness	Patrick Mason
	Moses Rock	Frank O'Connor/Hugh Hunt	Patrick Mason
	The Well of the Saints	JM Synge	Patrick Mason
	The Doctors Dilemma	GB Shaw	Lynne Parker
	Chamber Music	Hugh Leonard	Patrick Mason
	Observe the Sons of Ulster	Frank McGuinness	Patrick Mason
	Marching Towards the Sonura		
	The Shadow of a Gunman	Sean O'Casey	Ben Barnes
	Tagann Godot	Alan Titley	Tomas MacAnna
	Blinded by the Light	Demiot Bolger	Caroline FitzGerald
	The Glass Menagerie	Tennessee Williams	Judy Friel
	Ulysses in Nighttown	James Joyce/Marjorie Barkentin	Tomas MacAnna
	Joyicity	Ulick O'Connor	Caroline FitzGerald
	Caftleen Ni Houlihan/Tna	WB Yeats	James Flannery
	Dreaming of fte Bones/Puigator		
	Frauds	Fergus Linehan	Caroline FitzGerald
	Kitty O Shea	Tom MacIntyre	Ben Barnes
	Prayers of Sherkin	Sebastian Barry	Caroline FitzGerald
	Footfalls/What		
	Where/Catastrophe/Come and Go/		
	Nacht und Traume	Samuel Beckett	Sarah Jane Scaife
	Mamie Sighs	Donal O'Kelly	John Olohan
	Mother of all the Behans	Brian Behan/Peter Sheridan	Peter Sheridan
	1 am of Ireland	Edward Callan	Caroline FitzGerald
	A Moon for the Misbegotten	Eugene O'Neill	Vincent Dowling
	Ghosts	Henrik Ibsen/Tom Kilroy	Michael Scott

The Playboy of the Western World	JM Synge	Vincent Dowling
LadyG	Carolyn Swift	Barry Cassin
Danny. The Witch and the Goblin	Alan Cullen	John Olohan
Má Tá BréagAnn	Eamonn Kelly/Tomas MacAnna	Tomas MacAnna
Ullaloo	Marina Can-	David Byrne
The Patriot Game	Tom Murphy	Alan Gilsean
The Shadowy Waters	W.B. Yeats	James Flannery
One Last White Horse	Dermot Bolger	David Byrne
Strange Occurrence on Ireland's Eye	Denis Johnston	Caroline FitzGerald
Away Alone	Janet Moble	Fionnula Fianagan
The Winter Thief	Sean Mac Mathuna	David Byrne
Gadaf Gear na Geamh Oiche	Sean Mac Mathuna	David Byrne
White Woman Street	Sebastian Barry	Caroline FitzGerald
Bold Girls	Rena Munro	John Dove
The Countess Cathleen	W.B. Yeats	Stan Wojewodski
Democracy	Joseph Brodsky	Derek Chapman
Silver! ands	Antoine O'Flatharta	Andy Hinds
On The Inside - On The Outside	Tom Murphy	Alan Gilsean
The Wexford Trilogy (3 plays)	Billy Roche	Robin Lefevre
The Last Ones	Maxim Gorky/Cathy Porter	Katie Mitchell
Hubert Murray's Widow	Michael Harding	Patrick Mason
The Trojan Women	Euripides - Brendan Kennelly	Lynne Parker
The Cavalcaders	Billy Roche	Robin Lefevre
The Hour Glass/The Words Upon a Window Pane/		
The Cat and the Moon	W.B. Yeats	James Flannery

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
National Theatre Society Ltd.	Brothers of the Brush	Jimmy Murphy	David Byrne
	The Hamlet Project	William	Fiona Shaw
	Sheeps Milk on the Boil	Tom Mac Intyre	Tom Hickey
	Katie Roche	Teresa Deevy	Judy Friel
	The Broken Jug	John	Ben Barnes
	Asvlum 1 Asvlum I	Donal O'Kelly	John Crowley
	The Mai	Marina Carr	Brian Brady
Pan Pan Theatre Company	The Crystal Spider	Madame Patschore	Gavin Quinn
	The Exorcism of the Mechanical	Gavin Quinn	Gavin Quinn
	Martin Assassin of His Wife	Stephen	Gavin Quinn
	The Man with two Kisses	Adaptation of Stanislaw	Gavin Quinn
Passion Machine	Drowning	Paul Mercier	Paul Mercier
	Pilgrims	Paul Mercier	Paul Mercier
	Home	Paul Mercier	Paul Mercier
	Brownbread	Roddy Doyle	Paul Mercier
	Studs	Paul Mercier	Paul Mercier
	Masters	Paul Mercier	Paul Mercier
	Songs of the Reaper	10 Writers/10 Plays	Various
Pigsback	Don Juan	Michael West after	Jim Culleton
	This Love Thing	Marina Carr	Jim Culleton
	Howling Moons, Silent Sons	Deirdre Mines	Jim Culleton
	The Tender Trap	Michael West	Jim Culleton
	The Ash Fire	Gavin Kostick	Jim Culleton
	Buffalo Bill Has Gons to Alaska	Colin Teevan	Jim CullBton
	Jack Ketch's Gallows Jig	Gavin Kostick	Jim Culleton
Pink Panda Theatre Company	Oscar and Jim	Fergal O'Byrne	Fergal O'Byrne
	Wilde About America	Fergal O'Byrne	Fergal O'Byrne
	Swimming To Howth	Fergal O'Byrne	Gillian Reynolds
	Passengers	Fergal O'Byrne	Fergal O'Byrne
Playcircle	"Nineteen Sixty-Three"	Aodhan Madden	Michael Scott
	Errol Flynn Had the Body of a	Ivy Bannister	Caroline
	One for All	Niall McGarrigle	Michael Scott
	Madge and Pat	C. Brogan	Caroline
	Dollyman	John Barren	Tomas McAnna
Playwrights & Actors Company	Oscar	David Morris	Caroline FitzGerald
	Othello	William	Kevin McHugh
	Drunk Dog Lady Lover	Gabriel Grout	Pierre Campos
	Philadelphia Here I Come	Brian Friel	Kevin McHugh
	Macbeth	William	Kevin McHugh
	The Odd Couple	Neil Simon	Kevin McHugh
	Tarry Flynn	Patrick Kavanagh	Kevin McHugh
	One for the Road	Willv Russall	Barrv Cassin
	Semi Private	Marv Halbin	Kevin McHugh
	The Merchant of Venice	William	Kevin McHugh
	Bedroom Farce	Alan Avkboum	Kevin McHugh
	King Lear	William	Kevin McHugh
	Hamlet	William	Kevin McHugh
	All in Favour Said No	Bernard Farrell	Kevin McHugh
	Once a Catholic	Maiv O'Malley	Kevin McHugh
	Jacko '	John McArdle	Kevin McHugh
	Romeo and Juliet	William	Kevin McHugh

Lovechild

Gerard Stembridge Gerard Stembridge

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Project Arts Centre	Lovechild	Gerard Stembridge	Gerard Stembridge
	Lunchtime Series/Bewlev's	Aidan Matthews.	Caroline
	Tyrannosaunis Twerp	Frank McGuinness.	Jim Culleton
	Lipstick on the Host	Maeve Ingoldsby	Ronald Smith
	Foggy Hair and Green Eves	Aidan Matthews	Caroline
	An Béal Bocht	Tom Mac Intvre	Tom Mac Intvre
	The Kiss	Flann O'Brien	Ronald Smith
	Speed - The - Plow	Michael Harding	Michael Harding
	Big Mom	David Mamet	Declan Hughes
Punchbag Theatre Company	Famine	Ferdia Mac Anna	Patrick Sutton
	Philadelphia. Here I Come!	Tom Murphy	Sean Evers
	Kiss of the Spiderwoman	Brian Friel	David Quinn
	Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf	Manuel Piiig	Sean Evers
	Go On Red (3 One Acts)	Edward Albee	David Quinn
	Decadence/East (Double Bill)	Tom MacIntvre	Sean Evers\David
	The Shadow of a Gunman	Steven Berkoff	David Quinn
	Face Licker Come Home	Sean O'Casev	Sean Evers
	The Month of Sundays (Season 4 New Plays	Rita Ann Higgins	Sean Evers
	Eclipsed	Patricia Burke-	Rebecca Barlett.
	Fine Day for a Hunt	Rita Anne Higgins	Conor Maguire
	God of the Hatchman	Neville Carlvle	Aidan Crenelle
	The Life of Stuff	Gerrv Foramen	John Hargaden
	The Month of Sundays (Season	Patricia Burke-	David Quinn
	The Moving Crib	Tom MacIntvre	Sean Evers
	Extremities	Rita Ann Higgins	David Quinn
	Dancing at Lughnasa	Simon Donald	David Quinn
	Lunch with Beckett	Richard Byrne.	Brendan Murrav
	No Comet Seen	Harriet O'Caroll	Andrea Miller
	Red Kettle Theatre Company	Observe The Sons of Ulster	Barbara Parkinson
Marching Towards the Somme		Charlie Adiev	Brian Timan
Talbots Box		Companv Devised	Tommv Tiernan
Man Beast And Virtue		William	John Hargaden
The Constant Couple		Brian Friel	Katy Hayes
Translations		Samuel Beckett	Brendan Murrav
Bent		John Kavanagh	David Quinn
Moonshine		Frank McGuinness	Jim Nolan
Forty-Four Sycamore		Thomas Kilrov	Jim Nolan
The Pope and the Witch		Luigi Pirandello	Paul Brennan
Chickadee		George Farquhar	Judv Friel
The Price		Brian Friel	Ben Barnes
The Guernica Hotel		Martin Sherman	Jim Nolan
Salt Water Moon		Jim Nolan	Ben Barnes
Happy Birthday Dear Alice		Jim Nolan	Paul Brennan
The Black Pool		David French	Richard Meagher
Rough Magic Theatre		I Can't Get Started	' Bernard Farrell
	Hidden Charges	Jim Nolan	Richard Meagher
	Lady Windennere's Fan	Declan Hughes	Lynne Parker
	Digging for Fire	Arthur Riordan	Lynne Parker

Down onto Blue
The Dogs

PomBoyd
Donal trKelly

Lynne Parker
Lynne Paiker

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director
Rough Magic	New Morning	Declan Hughes	Lynne Parker
	Bat The Father, Rabbit The Son	Donal O'Kelly	Declan Hughes
	The Emergency Session	Arthur Riordan	Declan Hughes
	The Way of the World	William Congreve	Lynne Parker
	Love and a Bottle	George Farquhar/adapted by Declan Hughes	Lynne Parker
Second Age	Othello	William Shakespeare	Derek Chapman
	Macbeth	William Shakespeare	Alan Stanford
	The Merchant of Venice	William Shakespeare	Jim Culliton
	Othello	William Shakespeare	Alan Stanford
	The Plough and the Stars	Sean O'Casey	Peter Sheridan
	King Lear	William Shakespeare	Alan Stanford
	Hamlet	William Shakespeare	Alan Stanford
	Playboy of the Western World	J M Synge	Pat Laffan
	Philadelphia, Here I Come'	Brian Fnel	Pat Laffan
	Macbeth	William Shakespeare	Martin Drury
	Joyicity	Ulick O'Connor	Caroline FitzGerald
Smashing Times	Mary and Lizzie	Frank McGuinness	Jo Mangan
	Laundry and Bourbon	James McClure	Conor Norton
	Red Devils	Debbie Horsfield	Conor Norton
	Steel Magnolias	Robert Hurling	Guy Carlton
	Kavanagh's Wake	Devised by Kathy MacArdle	Mary Lemhan
	Bloomm' Women 2 One Woman Shows	Mary Lenihan/James Joyce	Mary Lemhan
	Triptych	Franca Rama	Kathy MacArdle
	Blood and Ice	Liz Locnead	Kevin Lavin
	Next to You I Lie	Devised Trouble and Strife Theatre	Gillian Hackett
Storytellers Theatre Company	Hard Times	Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy	Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy
	Silas Mamer	Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy	Bairbre N1 Chaoimh
	Dixie	Sean McCarthy	Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy
TEAM Theatre Company	Out of Line	Maeve Ingoldsby	Susie Kennedy
	The Monkey Puzzle Tree	Maeve Ingoldsby	Susie Kennedy
	One Star Away	Sean Moffitt	Patrick Sutton
	The Well	Ken Bourke	Susie Kennedy
	Here Come Cowboys	Colin Teevan	Patrick Sutton
	Earwigs	Maeve Ingoldsby	Patrick Sutton
	Performers	John McArdle	Patrick Sutton
	Firestone	Maeve Ingoldsby	Patrick Sutton
	ShadowTackle	Anne Barrett	Ronan Smith
	Ambrose and the Gumblewhimps	Roger Gregg	Ronan Smith

The Machine	Ghosts	Hennk Ibsen/Thomas Kilroy	Michael Scott
	Colomban Pageant	Michael Scott	Michael Scott
	Carousel	Rogers and Hammerstein	Michael Scott
	Songs by the River	Michael Scott	Michael Scott
	The Hostage (An Giall)	Brendan Behan/ TransI - Niall Robin/Michael Scott	Michael Scott
Theatre Omnibus	Kyles	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard David and Jean Regan
	Chimes and Ryhmes	Company Devised	Company Directed
	Burying Brian Born	Michael Hardmg	Philip Hardy
	Fionn McComhail and The Black Witch	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan
	Ree Raw Roola Boola	Philip Hardy	Michael Hardmg
	Witches Tower	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan
	The Refill Family (Anti-Utter)	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan
	The Pass of the Plumes	Bernard Dowd and Jean Began	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan
	Write - A - Story	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan

Organisation Name	Play/Production	Writer	Director	
Theatre Omnibus	Legend of AE	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Eisc na gCorp	Jean Regan and Bernard Dowd	Jean Regan and Bernard Dowd	
	Sliabh na mBan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Donal and Munhin	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	The Golden Combs	Bernard Dowd and Jean Began	Bernard Dowd and Jean Began	
	Jack and his Friends	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Spooks and Gooks	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	The Colleen Bawn	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Naming of Lough Derg	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	The Children of Lir	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	On Broken Wings	Dermot Healy	Dermot Healy	
	Gunkman and Varietyman-	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Healthy Eating Week			
	Ballindine Church-150 Years	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Oowd and Jean Regan	
	Cashel of Comiac McCarthy	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Unlucky Wally-20 Years On	Raymond Briggs	Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Parade 'The Wedding'		Bernard Oowd and Jean Regan	
	Parade 'Shannon Status'		Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Parade 'Amnesty'		Bernard Dowd and Jean Began	
	Parade 'St. Patrick's Day 1994		Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Parade 'Unemployment'		Bernard Dowd and Jean Regan	
	Theatre Works	These Obstreperous Lassies	Collective, Mairin Johnston. Laura Caffrey	Tim McDonnell
	Very Special Arts	Seconds Out	8 Trainees of St. Francis Training Centre, Cork	Patrick Sutton
Swings and Roundabouts		Transition Year Class of 22 from Grange Community College	Patrick Sutton	
Riders on the Stomi		Tara Farrell and Niamh O'Dowd Emily Casey and	Emelie FitzGibbon Gerry Morgan	

		William Kennedy	
Wet Paint Arts	The Lament for Arthur Cleary	Dermot Bolger	David Byrne
	Tangles	Devised Piece	David Grant
	Fear of Feathers	Owen Roe	Maureen White
	"F"	Devised Piece	David Grant
Wildcard Theatre Company	The Three Students	Jonathan Ryder	Jonathan Ryder
	She Stoops to Conquer	Oliver Goldsmith	Jonathan Ryder
	The Shadow of the Glen	J.M. Synge	John Breen
	Rewind	Martin Devaney	John Breen
	Claptrap	Jonathan Ryder	Jonathan Ryder
Yew Theatre Company	Wide Open Spaces	Rene de Obaldia	Pierre Campos
	The Gigli Concert	Tom Murphy	Pierre Campos
	Jacko	John McArdle	Pierre Campos
	Joyriders	Christina Reid	Pierre Campos
	The Fetishist	Michael Toumier	Pierre Campos
	Hamlet	William Shakespeare	Pierre Campos
	Jamas and the Giants Peaches	Roald Dahl	Pierre Campos
	MAC	Henry Hudson	Pierra Campos
	McCrump and the Clown	Brian Way	Pierre Campos
	In The Shadow Of The Glen/The Tinkers Wedding	J.M. Synge	Pierre Campos
	The Magic Island	C.D. Taylor	Jo Mangan
	A Man With Connections	Alexander Gel inan	Pierre Campos
	The Misfortunate Husband	Moliere	Pierre Campos
	Pinocchio	Devised	S. Doyle

APPENDIX V CHRONOLOGY OF ARTS COUNCIL TOURING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Modification of regulations governing the operation of the Arts Council's Theatre Touring Scheme from 1982-1995.

1982

Maximum pre-production grant is 66% of costs

Touring costs guarantees to address gap between touring company's costs and receiving venue's costs, and venues income guarantee (which must be at least 20% of cash capacity). Full touring costs guarantees in respect of "occasional" venues (i.e. where there is no permanent professional management).

Applications either directly to Arts Council or via the National Touring Agency (NTA)

Decisions "in principle" available from Council as to "acceptability" of plays in artistic terms, but these are not funding decisions

- Dublin not acceptable as a touring date
- Management fee of 8% of touring costs acceptable in budgets
- Complex venue incentives to encourage the promotion of tours and to achieve the highest level of income possible
- Three assessment dates per year

1984/85

Venues no longer required to guarantee a basic level of income; Council will operate a fee incentive based on levels of actual box-offices income.

- 100% pre-production grants available to all independent companies who tour for at least four weeks.
- "Block" or "season" grant may be offered in certain cases:
- Venues could offer guarantees to touring companies not receiving direct Council subsidy
- Flexibility introduced to deadlines
- Other technical and administrative procedures clarified.

1985-

Decision in 1984 to published revised brochure for scheme reversed at June 1985 meeting

Sub-Committee of Council appointed to review operation of the scheme, and of the NTA in particular.

At December 1985 meeting, new conditions as follows were agreed:

- Venue Incentives to be - net box-office revenue, after venue rental, royalties and centres to be allocated: 1/3rd to venue management
- 1/3 to production company
- 1/3 returned to Council/ACTTS funds

Other recommendations to council from committee

- 'Block grants' or 'season-grants' to be offered to at least 2 companies
- Budget to be at least £445,000 for ACCTS in 1986

1986-

Budget constraints led to suspension of scheme after March '86
- NTA could not remain viable and was wound-down

1987-

Objectives of Scheme re-evaluated in light of budget and funding difficulties. Needs of professionally-managed venues in Cork, Tralee, Limerick and Sligo to be prioritised.

- "Secondary" venues, or "occasional" venues to be discouraged.
- Venue rentals to "Big Four" venues to be increased to encourage them to maximise touring.
- Net box office receipts (i.e. gross box office less Royalties and contras) to be divided equally between venue management and touring management (or in proportions agreed by both), (i.e. no claw-back to the Council of any or all of surplus box-office receipts any more).
- Venues may apply a venue rental or part of a venue rental, if necessary, post facto, to address shortfall between actual box office receipts and its rental.
- rentals" to be calculated annually for the purposes of the scheme, (taking account of actual operating costs and actual subsidy levels) so as to avoid "double-funding".
- No revival of NTA
- All co-ordination and "policing" of schemes now the responsibility of the Council's Drama Officer.
- Dublin still not acceptable as a venue for touring scheme.

1988-

Extensive discussion continued within the Council on how to improve the scheme.

- Lack of a co-ordinating agency highlighted.
- Changing environment noted with new venues beginning to emerge and new companies interested in touring.
- budget constraints continue to frustrate implementing of sub-committee recommendations and officer's recommendations (N.B. Budget for touring scheme hardly increased during the period). 1982-(£239,768) to 1988-(£273,310)
- Costs of touring increased very significantly over that period.
- fewer "independent" management's operating/touring

1989-

Newly appointed Council undertakes a review of the operation of the Scheme and considers written submission from interested parties.

- a forum on theatre touring to be organised.

1990-

'Programming grants' to venues replace venue rentals. These allow venues to make their tour arrangements with professional companies who have not received touring grants.

- only limitations are: companies must be based in Ireland; companies must be professional; companies must not be based in the same centre (town or city) as the venue.
- largest budget for ACTTS to date achieved (£431,616) enabling seven companies to undertake tours and venues generated significant levels of

touring activity using their programming grants.

- Dublin accepted as a touring date for companies based outside Dublin (10 professional companies based outside Dublin received grants in 1990-6 venues outside Dublin received grants under Drama)

1991-

Guarantees for County Arts Officers introduced to enable them to act as promoters of touring professional theatre companies in their areas, particularly to centres which do not have an arts centre theatre or established venue. Co. Arts Officer applies to Council giving details costs of company venue, promotion etc., estimates of income, and guarantee sought.

- Production companies in receipt of touring grants cannot seek a County Arts Officers guarantee as well.

1992-

Programming grants increased and extended to 6 venues.

- Production companies complain that they are getting pushed out of a fair share of the overall touring budget.

- Only 3 full and 1 short touring grants to production companies made in 1992.

1993-

Budget achieved £ .5 m for first time.

- Touring companies share 50% of the budget with venues and promoters

- 13 grants to touring companies

- 6 programming grants to venues

1994-

New Council concerned about operating of the scheme in particular: -

a. audience development:

b. marketing:

c. young audiences:

d. co-ordination:

e. better "spread" throughout Country

- TYP envisages significant increases in funding for touring and in range of and "spread" of touring.

- 10 production companies receive touring grants 10 venues receive programme funds 10 Co. Arts Officers receive guarantees for tours they promote

1995-

Theatre Review undertaken

APPENDIX VI

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A DOING OF LIFE

A Profile of Drama and Theatre Practices involving
Young People and the Broader Community
Compiled by Declan Gorman

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Young People and the Broader Community

Compiled by Dedan German

Contents

- 201 **Introduction and Acknowledgments**
- 205 **Drama and Young People**
Youth Theatre
Drama in the Lives of Young People
Education and Children's Theatre
- 230 **Drama and Communities**
Community Drama
Drama and Disability
Amateur Drama
Student Drama
- 243 **Appendix 1:**
Learning Lines.
Training for Careers in the Theatre
- 252 Appendix 2:
State Interventions
Some notes on the roles of selected statutory funding bodies with regard to theatre in Ireland
- (a) FAS
 - (b) Local Authorities
 - (c) The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht
 - (d) The Cultural Relations Committee of the Department of Foreign Affairs
- 268 Appendix 3:
List of Youth Drama Groups in Ireland
- 269 Appendix 4:
Details of Theatre Review Consultation Meetings

A DOING OF LIFE

A Profile of Drama and Theatre Practices
involving Young People and the Broader Community

“Drama is a doing of life”

Brian Way, pioneer of modern approaches to drama for and with young people.

On the Everyday Theatre

*You who perform plays in great houses
Under false suns and before silent faces
Look sometimes at
The theatre whose stage is the street,
The everyday theatre
Common, unrewarded with honour,
But of this earth, living,*

*Your achievement will be less
If your theatre is less
Meaningful than his
Whose stage is the street,
If it touches less
Deeply the lives of those who watch,
If its reasons
Are less,
Or its usefulness*

BertoltBrecht(c1930)

INTRODUCTION

This part of the Report covers various aspects of theatre and drama in Ireland which have not fallen directly into the terms of the “Theatre in Ireland” Report which immediately precedes this final section.

The section is primarily concerned with learning and the role of drama in education and community development processes ; also taking a look at the venerable tradition of amateur drama in Ireland; and career preparation for work in the theatre (Appendix 1).

Appendix 2 sets out basic notes on the role of various state agencies which are players in the provision for drama in Ireland, looking particularly closely at the role of FÁS - the Training and Employment Agency, which is shown to be a very significant source of relatively new funding for the Arts in Ireland.

This section draws on various strands of new research as well as existing publications. Responsibility for collating and in large part writing up the information has rested with the Theatre Review Co-ordinator.

The Theatre Review is guided by the understanding that no art form exists in isolation. The “Theatre in Ireland” section has focused on particular and highly significant aspects of theatre in Ireland, concentrating primarily on the professional production sector. This section examines other areas of drama which are driven by different concerns but which are inseparable from any serious consideration of theatre in Ireland, whether it is the work of activists creating drama with young people in community projects, plays for children in the Ark - the children’s cultural centre in Temple Bar, or the nation-wide activities of the amateur drama networks.

In particular, the pages on Drama in the Lives of Young People address certain painful but unavoidable facts about the wider society within which the arts exist. A significant percentage of the young population - particularly in the cities - are alienated and disaffected through poverty, lack of employment prospects and the legacy of generations of cultural deprivation. In recent years the arts, and notably drama, have taken root in the barren soil of housing estates and flats complexes as young people and their community leaders have sought new languages and media and forms to process and express their experience and to be liberated through cultural repossession. This Review would be incomplete without a description - however cursory - of the role drama has played in this emerging ‘third tradition’ which is neither amateur nor professional in the traditional structural sense referred to in the “Theatre in Ireland” Report.

Practically every section of the following, including Appendix 1 on FÁS, contains views and a weight of hard facts which suggest the need for urgent harmonising of relationships and strategies among a range of key statutory and industry players: the Arts Council, the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Departments of Foreign Affairs, Education and the Environment, FAs, the VECs, representative bodies from within the amateur and community drama worlds and also - and not least - representatives of the professional theatre industry. The growth of theatre activity mirrors and indeed outstrips the expansion of the arts in Ireland generally in the past decade. The need for a national co-ordinated policy - as implicit in the Arts Plan 1995-1997 - has never been more urgent.

Acknowledgments

The Youth Theatre section of this paper was guided by interviews with youth drama leaders and practitioners and was greatly facilitated by the co-operation of the National Association of Youth Drama, who provided useful material from files and offered assistance to the research assistant, Kate McSweeney. The section contains basic facts about 50 youth drama groups located around the country, focused by a detailed survey of 12 of these groups.

Drama in the Lives of Young People is a study of the role of drama in youth work, youth training and social lives of young people, focusing particularly on the pioneering work in this area which has been undertaken in areas of social and economic disadvantage. For this section, access to research resources at Wet Paint Arts was of considerable benefit to this Review.

Community Drama looks mainly at drama work among adults in community development contexts. The collaboration of C.A.F.E. (Creative Activity for Everyone), and in particular,

access to proceedings of meetings of a nascent but not yet formally constituted Community Drama Network, was important in this section, seeking to describe this largely uncharted area.

The sections on Children, Theatre-in-Education and Drama-in-Education give very basic introductions to the players and concerns of this increasingly world. These areas are subject to ongoing research which is not yet complete and it is intended to return to them in greater depth in a larger publication in the course of this Review.’

The Amateur Drama notes are informed by submissions to the Arts Plan 1995-1997 by the two major representatives of the movement, the Amateur Drama Council and the Drama League of Ireland, and by further interviews with key activists including the DLI committee.

The Appendix on Training contains a fairly full listing of the options available for training in theatre in the Republic of Ireland in 1995. Research in this was assisted by Caroline Grace.

The appendix on FAS contains important and revealing new statistics on the level of that organisation’s involvement in the arts - and in particular in drama - in Ireland. A major research project over several months was undertaken by Fiona Burns on behalf of the Arts Council, with guidance and assistance from Mary Cloake, the Arts Council’s Regions Officer and Paula Clancy of the Graduate School of Business at University College Dublin. The section also considers attitudes to the role of FAS in the arts and reflects on the history of Department of Labour schemes and their impact on current drama practice in Ireland.

Other statutory bodies are mentioned in brief introductory notes.

The purpose of this paper, like the purpose of the Report as a whole, is to inform debate which will follow publication. The research has been varied and eclectic in its style, methodology, depth, and sources, differing from section to section. The role of the Co-ordinator has been to assemble a range of existing and new data in a somewhat limited period of time and place it on record for the purpose of the Review. Where views and perspectives on issues are occasionally aired, they represent opinions which have been expressed in interviews or in publications and where possible these have been credited in footnotes. The position of the Arts Council is articulated and identified where relevant. The papers as a body of work are independently researched and presented, however, and do not necessarily reflect the perspective of the Arts Council.

Declan German
Theatre Review Co-ordinator

(i) “Irish Theatre 1995-1996: Dialogues” - containing edited transcripts of consultation meetings and further research papers to be published March 1996.

Note: Footnotes on the following pages appear at the end of each sub-section.

I DRAMA AND YOUNG PEOPLE

YOUTH THEATRE

Youth Drama and Youth Theatre refer to theatrical endeavours where Young People (usually 12 to 22 years) are involved as participants in making the drama. A helpful guideline was offered by the Development Officer of the National Association for Youth Drama (NAYD) at the conference on the Regional Development of the Arts in Cork in May 1995, distinguishing between

drama as an act of imagining in which all can and should participate, and theatre as the formalised, audience-oriented product of this imagining in which most people's involvement is reduced to that of onlooker'.

Youth Drama then could be said to refer to the totality of processes in which young people participate within their groups, including workshops, games, improvisations, scriptwriting, etc. Youth Theatre refers to public performances of plays presented by young people. The two are inextricably linked, with public presentations representing the external manifestation of the in-house processes of drama.

Youth Drama, like Community Drama, is primarily concerned with *process*. Several international and Irish reports have described the educational and personal development benefits of participation in arts activity. Drama, it has been suggested, is a particularly apt form for the developmental journey of the adolescent. It is group focused, involves planning, decision-making, responsibility-sharing, problem solving, social interaction and above all it unlocks individual creative ability. The 1993, Making Youth Arts Work report has asserted:

Drama is seen as a more accessible art form due to its predominance in Irish cultural life generally and because it uses as its raw materials the same elements as ordinary social interaction (e.g. speech, movement, use of objects) The distinctive value of drama in youth work is that it can explore personal and social development in an organic way through improvisation, script devising and performance."

While different Youth Drama groups will operate with different objectives and emphases, it can be stated that the youth theatre performance will usually represent a high point in the group's calendar but should always be viewed in the context of on-going processbased work.

In the Republic of Ireland, Youth Drama is represented centrally by the National Association of Youth Drama (est. 1980).¹⁰ NAYD is funded primarily by the Arts Council (£37,500 in 1995) and the Department of Education (£24,875)

The membership of NAYD is conveniently grouped into 5 categories. These are:

- A. Youth Drama and Youth Theatre Groups
- B. Individual members (teachers, prospective leaders etc.)
- C. Professional Arts Organisations offering relevant services
- D. Institutions in the Education Sector (e.g. colleges offering drama programmes/relevant teacher organisations)
- E. Youth Work Groups and Individual Youth Workers.

This section is concerned mainly with the activities of groups in category A. i.e. “dedicated” Youth Drama and Youth Theatre Groups. In the next section the role of drama in youth work and training is given particular attention. Drama activities in schools are addressed in the Drama-in-Schools section.

A Survey of Youth Drama/Youth Theatre Groups in Ireland

There are currently 50 dedicated youth drama groups in the Republic of Ireland, registered with NAYD (See Appendix 3). The longest established is Dublin Youth Theatre (est. 1977). The majority of groups, however, have been established in the past five years. (The ‘Making Youth Arts Work’ report of 1993 identifies 20 Youth Drama Groups.) Table A shows a regional breakdown of these groups:

Table A

Regional Distribution of Youth Drama Groups

(National Analysis of 50 Groups)

Region	No. of Groups
Dublin	
- City and Suburbs	17
Rest of Leinster*	13
Munster	8
Connacht	3
Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan	9

**includes Rush and Skerries, Co. Dublin*

The Theatre Review has undertaken a survey of a sample of twelve Youth Drama groups in Ireland, to establish trends in levels of participation; age range; methodology/process;

repertoire of work presented in public; funding and structures. The groups participating in the survey are listed in the endnotes.^{iv}

Basic facts and figures

Of the 12 groups surveyed, 6 are located in cities or large population centres; 1 is in a regional town; 1 is in a rural parish; 2 are in suburbs/satellite towns of Dublin; 1 is a local inner city group in Dublin and 1 is a youth theatre group for Dublin city as a whole.

This does not quite reflect the national picture where, of a total of 50 groups, 9 are located in cities or large urban centres outside of Dublin, 14 are located in smaller towns and 10 in villages or rural areas. In Dublin City there are 14 groups located around the suburbs/satellite towns, 2 in the inner-city and 1 - Dublin Youth Theatre, which since its inception has been constituted as a Youth Theatre for the city as a whole.”

Table B

Youth Drama Groups

Type of location

(National Analysis of 50 Groups)

Location	No. of Groups				
	Rural	Town	Suburb	Inner City	Large Town/City
Dublin City (central)					1
Dublin Inner City (local)				2	
Dublin suburbs			14		
Rest of Leinster *	3	6			4
Munster	2	2			4
Connacht	1	1			1
Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan	4	5			

**includes flush and Skerries, Co. Dublin*

The 12 groups have a total membership of 736, Waterford Youth Drama has an unusually high membership of 210, with its activities centred in several housing estates around the city. Taking Waterford out of the sample, and leaving aside the Dublin Youth Theatre with its city-wide membership pool of 115, the average membership of the groups surveyed is a fairly representative 41. The lowest are Red Cow Lane, newly formed in Dublin's North-West Inner City with 16 and Corcaghan Youth Drama established since 1991 in rural part of County Monaghan with 18. The largest outside of the unique Waterford and Dublin models are Dry Rain in Bray with 80 and Neilstown with 70. The estimated total membership of dedicated Youth Drama groups in Ireland is 2,500, although, allowing for unregistered groups it may be higher than this.

The typical age-range in the sample is 14 to 22 with three groups extending as far as 25 at the upper limit. Waterford, has members as young as ten and distinguishes between the 10 -14 age group and the 14 -22 age group. Neilstown, reflecting the common experience of Dublin suburban youth clubs, caters for members in the 8 -12 year age range as well as a 12 - 15 year olds' group and a 15-25 group. Most Youth Dramas formally or informally acknowledge the different needs of clusters of members at different ages and levels of experience within their activities. Members between 21 and 25 will usually be entrusted with leadership roles and semi-autonomous group structures.

Among the sample of 12, only 3 had been in existence prior to 1990. These were Dublin Youth Theatre (1977), Waterford Youth Drama (1985) and Neilstown Youth Theatre

(1988). A further five were formed between 1990 and 1993 and four have been formed since the beginning of 1994.

The typical activity pattern is the weekly workshop, usually on a Saturday or Sunday (7 of the 12 have workshops at weekends, while 2 opt for a mid-week evening). Neilstown and Waterford, reflecting the diversity of their memberships have workshops several evenings per week with different groups. Dry Rain in Bray hosts a separate mid-week creative writing workshop. Members of Galway Youth Theatre, a Youth Drama group which is distinct in that it includes career training as a core objective, attend two workshops each week.

Key long-term survival indicators

Three main factors affect the development, longevity and success of a Youth Drama group. These are:

- Funding levels
- Support Infrastructure/Resources
- Leaders

Funding

The Making Youth Arts Work Report (1993) sets out guidelines for annual funding needs of Youth Drama groups, breaking the groups into 4 categories, namely:

Professionally staffed groups which are run by volunteers with public sector support (albeit limited) and have extensive programmes and outreach projects.

(These groups it was argued needed an annual budget of £25,000 each).

Voluntary staffed groups supported by a youth or arts organisation who have year round programmes and outreach projects.

(These groups needed an annual budget of £10,000 each.)

Voluntary staffed groups with little infra-structural support who run a year round or seasonal programme.

(Such groups needed an annual grant of £2,000 each).

Fledgling youth theatres with little support or expertise

(which needed access to a work space and a grant of £400 - £800 which would allow the leader to attend a youth drama course).

The agencies which separately or in combination provide funding for Youth Drama groups are: Local Authorities through the Arts Officer structure, Vocational Education Committees (in Dublin, Comhairle Ie Leas Oige). and The Arts Council. While there is local liaison between these agencies, there is no combined policy or funding strategy at national level, reflecting the uncoordinated pattern of provision for the arts in Ireland in general. There is also a vast variety in VEC and local authority provision levels from county to county. A number of Youth Drama groups are supported by FÁS Schemes, either directly or indirectly where a professional company provides staffing support to a group.

Some Youth Drama groups have accessed once-off sponsorship or won once-off awards from such organisations as the Irish Youth Foundation and the Ireland Funds. Kilkenny Youth Theatre has received a once-off grant from the European PETRA programme to

fund a Youth Initiative Training programme. Most engage in local fundraising through small ads in programmes, local donations, quizzes, raffles and other fund-raising events.

Of the 12 groups surveyed, 8 receive funding from a local authority, 4 from the V.E.C.”⁶ (or Comhairle Le Leas Oige) and 3 from the Arts Council.”⁶ A further 2 have received Arts Council support in the past in the form of an artist-in-the-community grant. One group indicated that it had received local authority funding in the past but that this funding had been withdrawn.

Table C

Youth Drama Groups

*Levels and sources of funding (representative sample of 12 groups)

Name of Group	Arts Council	VEC	Local Authority
[^] Activate Youth Drama, Cork Corcaghan Youth Drama, Co. Monaghan Droichead, Drogheda Dry Rain, Bray		£153 £5,500	£200 £200
Dublin Youth Theatre	+£27,400	£5,000	£5,000
Galway Youth Theatre	£15,000	£22,049	£1,950
[^] Kilkenny Youth Drama Neilstown Youth Drama Red Cow Lane Tallaght		£100	£1,000
Waterford Youth Drama	£15,000	£24,830	£2,000
Wexford Youth Drama			£140

**Refers to cash grants only. Does not include assistance-in-kind.*

[^]linked to professional Theatre Organisations. No direct funding to Youth Theatre isolated.

+Excludes £3,000 Capital Grant

The above table indicates that only three groups have exceeded the £25,000 funding level proposed in ‘Making Youth Arts Work’ to sustain professionally staffed groups. It is known that no group outside the sample exceeds this figure. No group in the sample falls into the £10,000 - £25,000 second category recommended for voluntary staffed groups.

Support Structures

The key resources and support structures which have been shown to contribute to the resilience of groups are:

- Close link with an Arts Centre
- Close link with local Youth Services
- Support of County Arts Officer
- Support in kind from V.E.C.
- Close link with Amateur Drama Group
- Close link with a Professional Theatre Company or Arts Resource Group
- Local Community support

The more established groups will often enjoy support from more than one of the above. Absence of at least one is seen as precarious to the survival of new groups, and there has been a noteworthy turnover of groups established by dynamic individuals but which have not survived the burn-out or change-of-personnel factors, due to lack of support structures.

Another key infrastructural survival indicator is access to or ownership of premises. One Youth Drama group in Ireland has exclusive use of its own performance space. Dry Rain in Bray since gaining control of its own theatre. An Lar, has emerged as one of the leading groups in the country. Dublin Youth Theatre owns an old Victorian house suited to workshop and rehearsal but not public performances, and its premises functions as a kind of club or meeting place of members and ex-members. Most Youth Drama groups, however, share, rent or borrow space which inhibits certain activities and development.

Another newly emerging infrastructural support is linkage with a professional theatre company or arts resource organisation. Activate Youth Theatre in Cork was established and is supported by Graffiti Theatre Company and the Kilkenny Youth Theatre exists as part of Kilkenny Theatre Arts which also includes Barnstorm Theatre Company. Tallaght Youth Theatre is directly supported by the Tallaght Artsquad *See Table D on next page*

Leaders

As with many other aspects of social, human endeavour. Youth Drama is affected by the quality of personnel controlling it. Groups have come and gone, surviving only until a dynamic leader or founder moves on:

The model of swift intervention by a professional who sets up a company, embraces it with energy and vision and then leaves for another contract seems not to work, whereas the slow and indigenous growth of a company linked, for example, to a Youth Service does. ^{viii}

In the early years, however, the commitment and ability of one or more key personnel is as critical as the quality of structures and links. One of the smaller groups in the survey operates its administration from its leader's sitting room. The voluntary base of personnel has been described as a cornerstone of Youth Drama practice in Ireland, the necessity for a professionally resourced umbrella group and instances of professional administration in larger, urban-based groups notwithstanding.

Table D

Support Structures

Name of Group	Arts Council	Youth Service	County Arts Officer	VEC	Amateur Drama	Professional Organisation	Community Support	Own Premise	Arts Centre
Activate Youth						•		•	
Drama, Cork									
Corcaghan Youth									
Drama, Co. Monaghan					•		•		
Droichead, Drogheda			•	•			•		•
Dry Rain, Bray			•	•			•	•	
Dublin	•								
Youth Theatre	•		•	•				•	
Galway									
Youth Theatre	•	•	•	•					•
Kilkenny									
Youth Drama			•			•	•		
Neilstown									
Youth Drama		•					•		
Red Cow Lane						•	•		•
Tallaght			•	•			•		
Waterford									
Youth Drama	•	•	•	•			•		•
Wexford									
Youth Drama			•				•		•

Y

Note: Tables do not show once-off support or grants such as Ireland Fund start-up grants, PETRA etc.

The term 'leader' has a specific meaning in Youth Drama, referring not only to the director or key permanent figure, but also to workshop tutors. Some groups rely entirely on their own in-house leader for all or most of their workshop activities. Most, however, have a regular resident leader but enjoy regular workshops given by guest leaders. These guest leaders tend to reappear across the country, having been trained and/or identified as professional practitioners with the rare skills necessary to animate youth drama, usually specialising in specific theatre disciplines; voice, contact improvisation, percussion, scriptwriting etc.. Such leaders usually receive nominal payment from member subscriptions. Occasionally they are paid via V.E.C. mechanisms. In some cases, the input is entirely voluntary.

With the proliferation of groups and the beginnings of recognition of the vital social, educational and cultural role which Youth Drama now plays in Irish life, the balance between voluntary ethos and professional specialist leadership has become a matter of serious discussion, and is linked with the debate about the role of professional artists and amateurs in the community arts area in general. Some of the groups in the survey use FÁS schemes to pay leaders' fees, others avail of arrangements with the V.E.C. There is currently no co-ordinated policy or system of funding governing this aspect of the sector.

Training

The training of personnel in the specialised skills of Youth Drama leadership has been by and large ad hoc and unregulated in the past. NAYD has been active in encouraging and facilitating training for leaders and has a sub-committee dedicated to Education and Training. Apart from the examples shown below, there have been admirable instances of modular, once-off, distance learning and other adaptable training initiatives as youth theatre has moved from being a limited activity confined to a few large urban centres to being a national movement in urban and rural Ireland. Among those which have set standards in the past have been the Kerry and Ossory Diocesan Youth Services respectively. What follows is a snapshot of some current and proposed training programmes in Youth Drama. It is not exhaustive but names the main initiatives.

The most consistent programme available has been an annual, intense week-long residential training programme run by NAYD in association with the Drama League of Ireland (formerly Amateur Drama League) entitled "Developing a Youth Drama". The course is designed specifically for people involved in Youth Drama and interested in the development of their group.

NAYD are currently involved in discussions towards establishing a Youth Theatre Module within the Extra-Mural Course in Drama and Theatre Studies at St. Patrick's University College, Maynooth.

An in-situ NAYD training programme based on a modular approach of one- and two-day intensive classes over a six-month period will commence in 1996 for Youth Drama leaders in the Dublin/Vicklow area. A similar programme for Galway is planned but currently on hold.

In Cork, Graffiti Theatre Company which runs an extensive range of drama programmes intended for young people, includes outreach training alongside its core Theatre-in-Education activities and its support for the Activate Youth Theatre. The ACTIVATE Drama

Initiative introduces teachers, youth leaders and social workers to drama skills which they can use in their work with young people.

A significant new proposal in Youth and Community Theatre training is 'Roots' a pilot programme recently initiated by Wet Paint Arts in Dublin, in partnership with the City Arts Centre. A pilot action research programme over 6 months has commenced with research into the areas of community, youth, amateur and student drama, recognising that

most of these practices have existed in somewhat isolated and poorly resourced contexts and have had little recourse to training or the opportunity to co-relate experience and visions for future development. The Roots project aims to establish a focal point for dialogue among practitioners and to research in a practical and engaged manner the training and development needs of the sector in future years.

The programme includes a 12-week pilot course for 15 participants who will be referred and supported by sponsoring projects. As well as practical theatre skills and group work skills, the participants will receive modules on cultural policy and community/youth arts and will partake in field trips to professional, community, spectacle and other models of theatre practice in Ireland and overseas. The experiment is a limited pilot programme intended to inform training policy in this emerging sector in future years.

Beyond Youth Drama

Youth Drama is not seen by its proponents as a training forum or stepping stone to eventual career entry to professional theatre. The fact that a number of internationally and nationally established actors and other practitioners were introduced to theatre through Youth Drama in Ireland is a tribute to the quality of the Youth Drama experience and the nurturing environment for talent which Youth Theatre provides. Nonetheless, with the sole exception of Galway Youth Theatre (which runs a one-year production course accredited by the National Council for Vocational Awards and a two-year performance course), youth drama groups in Ireland are resolute in their commitment to drama primarily and above all as a personal development and social arena in which young people can develop creative skills and confidence.

Beyond youth drama comes adulthood, and the universe of youth drama is full of anecdotal and hard evidence of young people who enter the group personally insecure, alone or simply culturally alienated, who develop what are conveniently referred to as 'life skills' or 'transferable skills' to participate fully in a complex society not always hospitable to the needs of young people. The close connection of Youth Drama to the amateur drama movement in some instances and to broader community programmes elsewhere means that many young people retain an interest and practical involvement in drama activities after they move on from their youth drama groups. Equally, very many do not, but go on to other things.

Links to the Professional Industry

Despite this insistence that it is not a training ground for theatre careers, high-standard, consistent Youth Drama practice will often, nonetheless, have the 'side-effect' of unearthing exceptional talent and unlocking ambition in a young person to enter the difficult world of professional theatre or film.

Waterford Youth Drama, acknowledging this 'by-product' consequence of its activities has been campaigning for the establishment of a full-time theatre training programme for the South-East to be based at Waterford R.T.C.™ Significantly, a new one-year certificate Course in Theatre Studies at the Central Technical Institute in Waterford has enrolled its maximum complement of 20 students in its first year this year. A two-year drama course has just commenced in Bray, and the full complement of 40 places has just been taken up. These examples contrast with the experience of a number of other regional V.E.C.s which have offered theatre studies programmes in towns without an established youth theatre base, where there was no place take-up or insufficient to merit progressing^x It may be too early to suggest that the proliferation of youth theatres will lead to continuing increased demand for such full-time training programmes, but the early signs would suggest a pattern.

Youth Drama groups in the past have occasionally been the spawning ground of independent theatre companies. A number of Dublin Youth Theatre veterans have formed companies, although most of these initiatives have had short life-spans. DYT itself encourages and facilitates its older members within reason if and when enterprising ideas for new initiatives emerge (for instance Claochló, a members-initiated Irish language workshop and performance company whose 1995 project is the intriguingly titled 'Gaeilge Plague'). Dry Rain in Bray have facilitated the establishment, again by its mature members, of a children's theatre company. In Waterford, older members of WYD have formed 'Blind Mirror', a semi-professional independent company.

At present, there are no specific mechanisms designed to enable the small number of young people emerging from Youth Drama who will wish to pursue full-time careers in theatre to gain entry to formal career training. It seems apparent that with the phenomenal growth in Youth Theatre activity in Ireland, this question of access - in economic, sociological and aesthetic terms - to industry structures will need to be addressed, and the industry will need to look imaginatively to structured training and career entry development to accommodate this next generation of practitioners.

The 'Roots' experiment (see above) points to a further solution, which is the recognition and consolidation of community and youth drama activity as a valid cultural workplace in its own right, with home-grown talent being trained to return and enlarge and invigorate continually the dynamics of local cultural experience. This ultimately will require a co-ordinated response from the Youth Affairs Section of the Department of Education, the Local Authorities and the Arts Council and other state bodies such as has been mooted in the past, but failed to take root, although there is greater optimism now, since the publication of the Arts Plan 1995 - 1997, which strongly proposes such liaisons.

Cultural Impact

The impact of Youth Drama on the development of Irish Theatre in general will not be measured in terms of numbers and quotas of personnel emerging alone. A likely consequence of the growth of Youth Drama and Community Drama will be an already perceptible challenge to the hierarchies, methodology and aesthetics of Irish Theatre.

The survey of 12 groups indicated that the standard method of creating dramatic work for presentation in Youth Drama is collaborative. Performances are devised in workshop or developed by commissioned writers in consultation with participants. Consultation and group dynamics are a central feature of all Youth Drama work. This draws partly from the

group methods of youth work and community development generally, but is likewise linked into international theatre and dance movements which have somewhat passed mainstream Irish theatre by.

Against the backdrop of increased Youth Drama activity at national level, it is thus worth noting that of 8 professional theatre productions funded by the Arts Council to tour in Ireland in 1994, 2 were not attributed to an author - rather were devised. In the Theatre Projects category, again 2 out of 8 were devised. Companies as diverse as Macnas, Spectacle Theatre Company, Galloping Cat, Barabbas, Corcadorca, Pigsback, Pan Pan and Bickerstaffe have either concentrated on or included devised work and collaborative creation in their repertoire over the past three years.

While the professional theatre is becoming increasingly alert to these new trends and possibilities which in turn make the theatre a more interesting field for young people both as practitioners and audiences, the Youth Drama movement continues to jealously guard against becoming a surrogate training laboratory for the professional theatre at the expense of its essential role in the enlargement of the ordinary lives of ordinary creative young people.

- (i) *Kathy Mac Ardle, Regional Development of the Arts conference, Cork, July 1995*
- (ii) *Making Youth Arts Work, Final Report of the Youth Arts Committee, 1993*
- (iii) *The aims of NAYD are:*
 - to promote a greater understanding of the potential of drama as a medium for learning and as a means of expression for young people*
 - to promote the advancement of the personal, social and aesthetic development of young people through performance and performance related skills and media*
 - to promote the emergence and development of youth theatres in Ireland*
 - to promote drama as an integral component of youth work*
- (iv) *The 12 Youth Drama groups surveyed for this Review are:*
 - Activate Youth Drama, Cork*
 - Corcaghan Youth Drama. Co. Monaghan*
 - Droichead Youth Theatre, Drogheda*
 - Dry Rain, Bray*
 - Dublin Youth Theatre*
 - Galway Youth Theatre*
 - Kilkenny Youth Drama*
 - Neilstown Youth Drama*
 - Red Cow Lane, Dublin North West Inner City*
 - Tallaght Youth Theatre*
 - Waterford Youth Drama*
 - Wexford Youth Drama*
- (v) *Many of the groups in smaller towns and the Dublin suburbs are very recent innovations, and are under-represented in the current survey as the sample was deliberately chosen to analyse those structures and links which contribute to longevity of a group.*
- (vi) *does not include services or supports in kind. Refers to grant aid only.*
- (vii) *The 3 groups in the sample of 12 in receipt of Arts Council funding represent the full extent of such grants to Youth Drama groups among the national pool of 50 groups. (viii) Emeilie Fitzgibbon: Life After Charisma - some thoughts on youth theatre structures! First Act, periodical of NAYD Vol. 5 No. 2 Autumn/Winter 1994*
- (ix) *See Research Project on the Feasibility of a Third Level Course in the Performing Arts based in Waterford, Waterford Youth Drama with assistance of Waterford Corporation, July 1995.*
- (x) *e.g. Monaghan institute for Further Education and Training, Co Westmeath VEC*

DRAMA IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Introduction

The following section has been informed primarily by internal files, reports and publications provided by Wet Paint Arts' to this research, with further reference to the 'Making Youth Arts Work' report referred to in the previous section and 'The Public and the Arts' report of 1994. It is a brief overview of a range of areas where drama interacts with the lives of young people particularly those in what has been described as 'the twilight zone' of areas of economic and social disadvantage. This introduction is a cursory sketch of the sector and as such offers no more than a basic insight to what is its stated interest and claim in respect of the arts. Future study of the sector and its evolution of arts provision should prove a stimulating and insightful experience for those interested in sharing in it.

Alongside the conventional 'Youth Theatre' model of provision (as defined and described previous section) there exists a much broader context into which young people's increasing interest and participation in drama and theatre must also be referenced if one is to appreciate contemporary social realities and their impact on the changing face of theatre in Ireland in the late 20th Century.

The broader context is one within which the status of young people and, in particular, their educational and vocational futures are being focused on at a time of unprecedented change.

Sociological and statistical evidence of the past decade or more has consistently drawn attention to the existence of a considerable crisis in young people's circumstances. Such research regularly instances educational dysfunctions, youth unemployment, social disaffection and related phenomena as the factors, that combined, have come to constitute what is now a widely recognised crisis; and one in which

the State has been largely ineffectual in both policy and operational terms in responding to in any realistic manner.ⁱⁱ

What has emerged during this turbulent period however is a crudely created and largely unco-ordinated field of provision aimed at supporting young people in their efforts to reorientate and find sustainable approaches to their future lives. It is within this field of provision that the arts and in particular drama and theatre are finding a new base that is particularly significant.

The full nature and extent of this field of provision is difficult to describe or define in any convenient manner as it is, as yet, still in an emergent and somewhat unconstituted form. It is possible however to characterise the field through identifying some of the key sectors and agencies involved and thereafter to describe briefly something of the range and types of arts and drama/theatre initiatives currently in operation within it.

The common feature and linkage running throughout this field of provision is an acknowledgement of the disproportionately large youth population of the country (i.e. 47% aged under 25 years of age, the largest youth population in the ED) and of the acute failure of our educational system and economy to adequately provide for young people's develop-

ment and integration into society.

The field of provision consists of some long established traditions (e.g. youth work services), others are more recently established state services (e.g. FÁS) and others again include formal educational bodies (e.g. VECs) who have adopted flexible approaches to their remit. Taken together (alongside a range of other smaller voluntary and state intervention services) this field, while somewhat amorphous does nonetheless constitute a significant matrix and one in which the arts are becoming a strong, recognisable and innovative aspect of its character.

1. Youth Work Services

The Irish Youth Service is an essentially voluntary service and as such comprises a range of National Voluntary Youth Organisations, regional representative bodies, local youth services and organisations and youth clubs.

Whereas there is no National Youth Policy there is an established tradition and understanding of youth work which is concerned with the core values of the personal development and social education of young people.

The role of youth work is recognised by State and provided for primarily under the auspices of the Department of Education (Youth Affairs Section). The Government's recent White Paper on Education recently underlined the significance of youth work and outlined a range of actions aimed at bringing a greater definition and efficacy to the service.

At present N.Y.C.I. - The National Youth Council of Ireland has a membership of up to 50 youth organisations and as such is recognised as the major representative body in the country. Other major organisations include the National Youth Federation, Foroige and the Catholic Youth Council whose membership when combined with the N.Y.C.I. mandate would claim to represent upwards of three-quarters of a million young people.

The extent of this sector and its critical role in the education of young people has not always been understood and it is only in the later part of the 1980's that the Arts Council, among other statutory bodies in various fields of interest, have wakened to its distinctiveness and potential as a vital field in which to interact and provide for appropriate development.

In this respect the Arts Council's A.C.E. (Arts, Community, Education) Report published in 1989 was a seminal influence. Among other critical contributions, it established a specific focus on the need for the arts within youth work and informal education generally to be planned and provided for in a serious and committed fashion. A year later the National Youth Arts Committee was established - a joint N.Y.C.I./Arts Council initiative - that over a period of three years concluded extensive research and pilot projects aimed at establishing the basis for a planned development of youth arts in Ireland.

In its final report 'Making Youth Arts Work' in 1993 the committee provided an authoritative case study of the congruence between the nature and purpose of youth arts and youth work generally and went on to make a clear set of recommendations addressing the absence of appropriate policies and co-ordination within the sector.

The Report reflected on the nature of the youth arts work noting that

it is a convenient generic term for a range of cultural activities, events, processes and manifestations in which young people, far from being the passive

cultural consumers which the mass media and cultural industries desire, are instead activists, image-makers, engaged in the “doing of life” which characterise all good arts education.ⁱⁱⁱ

It went on to underline the fact that the forms and the materials of arts and cultural activity are particularly conducive to enacting many of the personal and social processes which characterise adolescence and young adulthood, adding that

it is therefore a cultural (i.e. artistic and educational) imperative, particularly at a time of mass global youth culture, that Irish society provide forums for Irish young people to explore their distinctive cultural identities or their particular versions of the dominant, global modes.^{iv}

The extent of youth arts activity was also instanced in the report noting in particular the extraordinary proliferation of youth drama and theatre practices and of the emergence, within National Youth Organisations, of a pro-active stance in respect of developing qualitative youth arts provision.

The significance of this new cultural milieu within the youth service can be evidenced in part by:

- The appointment of a Youth Arts Officer within the National Youth Council of Ireland, the establishment of a Youth Arts Advisory Group and the undertaking of a national survey of educational and training needs within the sector.
- The appointment of arts officers and arts-specific development officers (including) drama in several key youth organisations and arts bodies including the Catholic Youth Council, Macra Na Feirme and the National Association for Youth Drama.
- The establishment of a dedicated Youth Arts Resource Centre, the first of its kind in Ireland, in Tralee under the auspices of the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service.
- The development of co-ordinated arts plans for young people (most with a high drama/theatre emphasis) between youth services and Local Authorities in many parts of the country including Waterford, Galway and Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown.
- The emergence of very challenging and distinctive new practices wherein the ‘arts-in-youth-work’ as distinct from ‘arts-specific’ youth work is beginning to assert new thinking around the critical social and political role of the arts in young people’s lives. This area of practice is perhaps best exemplified by the work of the Rialto Youth Project in Dublin, whose drama/theatre led programme over the past 5 years has been particularly revelatory.
- The extent of the research work and innovative pilot projects undertaken by Wet Paint Arts over the past decade that has served as a unique model for youth arts development; one which in turn has influenced a range of other key policy development initiatives and other arts and youth work bodies who share similar cultural commitments.

Taken together this sample range of developments point to a significant rise in consciousness and effort on the part of youth work services to provide for young people’s cultural lives. Over the past five years in particular, the momentum within the sector has been a rapid and innovative one in respect of youth arts.

It is not possible however, in a brief introduction such as this to identify or elaborate on

the many new practices and emerging debate concerning definitions etc.. Suffice to note that there is an urgent instinct at work within this sector trying to make manifest a climate and framework within which young people's participation in the arts is brought about in a culturally sensitive and equitable manner,

Whereas progress in this sector has been vital and eclectic at a youth organisation level, activists in the field express the view that it has been virtually stagnant at a State policy and funding level.

It has been long since established that the Department of Education and the Arts Council are the agencies charged with such functions yet despite sustained representation from within the sector, and despite the recommendations of the 'Making Youth Arts Work' report, and despite the more recent emphatic and frustrated calls of the National Youth Arts Monitoring Committee in 1995, there has been no discernible progress whatsoever.^v

It is important to note that the nature of the cultural arguments and the evidence of research brought forward in respect of the need for a youth arts policy has been widely acknowledged and accepted as providing a compelling case for such. It is equally argued that in provision terms, the level of funding being sought to seed such an initiative is very modest relative to the overall budgets of each agency.

In this respect, the finding of 'The Public and The Arts Report' (1994) is especially instructive insofar as it identified that

the greatest single proportion of the population selected as their chief priority arts programmes and facilities dedicated to working for and with children and young people.^{vi}

Those active in the Youth Arts field have looked to this finding, in the hope that a perceived intransigence on the part of the relevant state agencies in the past will now be set aside.

it is to be hoped therefore that the neglect of young people's cultural lives will not persist in Ireland and that alongside proposed reform in the education system that the arts might find a central role in youth work, providing as it does a fertile and largely unrestricted sector within which young people's efforts to understand and authenticate themselves culturally can be realised in powerful ways.^{vii}

It seems reasonable to suggest that the significance of the youth work sector; who it represents; and its cultural and artistic veracity should, be acknowledged by the Arts Council and indeed the professional theatre sector, particularly in the light of huge societal change.

The 'Making Youth Arts Report' (1993), in concluding that youth arts is a legitimate and distinctive cultural dialect within Ireland that must be recognised and acted upon as a matter of urgency, goes on to warn that:

Not to provide for them, because policy makers and providers do not hear them at all, or because they hear them only as so much noise, is to legislate for a muteness that has dangerous consequences for our arts, for our education, in short for our cultured^{viii}

2. Education and Training programmes for Unemployed Youth

As previously mentioned one aspect of the crisis in young people's circumstance in Ireland at present is the breakdown in formal education and the massive levels of youth unemployment, which according to a recent demographic study are likely to increase further in the foreseeable future.

In many respects the youth work sector (as outlined above) is providing, in part, a support service to young people in such circumstances but is clearly not - outside of advocacy work - responsible for meeting the vocational education and training requirements of young people.

The main response from the State sector in this regard can be referenced, in the main, to a 1983 E.C. council resolution which guaranteed access for unemployed school leavers to full time programmes of basic training and work experience, which subsequently became known as the 'Social Guarantee' and was launched in Ireland in 1985.

The 'Social Guarantee' is aimed primarily at two groups of young people; the main priority group (PG1) which targets those who leave school with no qualifications, and, priority group 2 (PG2) which is aimed at those who leave school at about junior certificate standard.

Since the late 1980's the Department of Education and the Department of Labour (more recently the Department of Enterprise and Employment) have been the main conduits through which initiatives largely financed by the European Social Fund concerning the education and training of unemployed young people have emerged. In particular FÁS (established in 1988) and the regional V.E.C.s (Vocational Education Committees) structures have provided the mainframe within which the key programmes have been implemented.

The extent to which the arts (and in particular drama and theatre) have found a currency within this emerging field of provision, while not easily assessed or quantified, is without question one of the most significant manifestations of organic cultural development in Ireland in the past decade, and, all the more remarkable for its relative unseenness and lack of formal response from within the established arts sector.

What follows is a very brief profile of some of the main programmes and schemes that have been developed and within same, a characterisation of the types of arts provision and practises pertaining to each.

The state's response to the main priority group (PG1) - early school leavers with no qualifications consists, primarily, of two key programmes known as Youthreach and Community Training Workshop (CTWs).

Youthreach

This programme has been in operation since 1989 and is targeted at early school leavers in the 15-18 year age cohort who leave school without educational qualification or vocational training. The Department of Enterprise and Employment's latest 'School Leavers

Survey' (June 1993) shows that there was an increase from 3,500 to 5,200 young people in this category in 1992.

Youthreach provides 2 years of integrated education, training and work experience with-in a network of 62 special out-of-school centres which is provided for, in the main by the Exchequer. The latest Government budget made provision of £8.1 million for Youthreach to continue and expand the number of places it offers up to a level of 3,500 per annum.

The V.E.C.s provide the main management and support systems to Youthreach whereas FÁS provide training allowances to the young people which varies from £22 - £28 per week depending on age.

Participants on Youthreach programmes are generally speaking very disadvantaged. A recent survey conducted among course co-ordinators revealed many shocking realities including the fact that 30% of the young people had less than 1 year post-primary education. The extent of the levels of learning difficulties, homelessness, substance abuse and trouble with the law was found to be equally stark.

The pedagogic approach in the Youthreach context is therefore understandably sensitive and flexible aiming as it does to help develop the social skills, esteem and vocational identity of young people for whom conventional systems have not only failed but in many cases severely damaged them.

The arts and again especially drama has found a natural place, alongside more well established areas of human practices, as a core area of learning within many Youthreach centres. Its primary use has been in the creation of group dynamics, and in applied circumstances as a form of social and political education aimed at exploring the many facets of adolescence and issues facing young people in contemporary Irish society

As such this form of drama work is proving enormously beneficial and according to recent trends is clearly in the ascendant, though hindered by the lack of trained personnel capable of sustaining such work. The lack of an adequate research and development facility in this respect is widely accepted as being the largest single impediment to progress, in what is otherwise a burgeoning area of new learning and practice.

In recent times there has also been an acknowledgement within the Youthreach sector of the need to establish an arts-specific Youthreach programme and to establish clear lines of access for young people through to further arts education and training opportunities as a matter of some priority.

Community Training Workshop (C.T.W.s)

The Community Training Workshop is also targeted at the PG1 group and is been jointly operated by the Department of Education and FÁS. C.T.Ws aim to provide training for young people in the 16-25 year age group who are at-risk due to poor educational attainment, literary/numeracy difficulties and low self-esteem.

Because of these difficulties many of the young people in this category would not normally be able to avail of the more mainstream training and employment programmes.

There is currently a network of 45 C.T.W.s throughout the country who operate programmes not dissimilar to Youthreach but with a slightly more hard skills, vocational approach.

Again the arts and drama have found a place and resonance within these programmes, though perhaps in less engaged or urgent a way than in Youthreach. The same problems exist also in respect of the lack of trained personnel or facility to interface with the arts sector in any meaningful or sophisticated manner. The extent of this gap in provision or co-ordinated support for such work is particularly difficult to understand, given the openness and pre-disposition of such local centres to utilise the arts in a committed educational manner.

It is hoped that such reviews that are underway at present within the Arts Council, FÁS and Curriculum Development bodies might address such matters in a considered, innovative and co-ordinated manner in the future.

NOTE

In addition to Youthreach and Community Training Workshop programmes there have been other programmes, key among them being the Community Youth Training Programme (C.Y.R.T.) whose emphasis is less educational and more training and work experience based, in which the arts are less visible a component and are therefore not commented upon.

Vocational Preparation and Training (V.P.T.) Programmes

Beyond the programmes aimed at the main priority group (PG1) there are further set of what are termed vocational preparation and training (V.P.T.) programmes aimed at the priority group 2 (PG2) ie: Young people who leave school at about junior level. Principal among these are the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (V.T.O.S.) and the Post-Leaving Certificate courses, now more commonly referred to as (P.L.C.'s) both of which fall under the auspices of the Department of Education and are implemented by Vocational Educational Committees.

There is however considerable confusion surrounding the status and purposes of both these initiatives. A recent National Youth Council Of Ireland (NYCI) report 'Youth Unemployment - A Call For Continued Action' noted that "in many ways the PLC's have become a form of further education which defeats the initial purpose of the V.P.T. programmes". Notwithstanding this political conundrum it is possible to point to a number of significant drama/theatre developments within the context of such initiatives.

Most markedly the establishment of a large number of full-time courses in drama and theatre studies under the auspices of the Post Leaving Certificate programme (P.L.C.s) is a key indicator of the emerging commitment among educationalists in providing for young people's interest in the performing arts. In Dublin city alone there are 5 such courses offering places for upwards of 100 young people annually. (Details of such courses is provided in Appendix 1 Training for careers in the theatre').

Alongside P.L.C.s there is also the V.T.O.S. which is targeted at those over 21 years of age who have been unemployed for at least 12 months. Again it is the V.E.C.s who operate V.T.O.S. courses that focus largely on business and technical skills but also include significant modules on socio-personal development within which the arts and drama have again found a considerable role.

Taken together the Youthreach, Community Training Workshops, Post Leaving Certificate courses and V.T.O.S. represent a huge investment by way of State effort at ameliorating the educational and unemployment crisis among such a large section of young people of Ireland.

The fact that the arts are featuring in such an interesting and challenging way within this new milieu comes as no surprise to the educationalists and co-ordinators responsible for such programmes, though there is clearly a huge deficit in the planning and integration of such arts practices as are emerging, and as such this is a critical matter in need of close study and response from the relevant state agencies.

The nature of the formal cultural sector's (in particular the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht and Arts Council's) relationship to this emerging field of education and training must be looked upon as a matter of some priority given the obvious congruence between the policy concerns of many of the agencies involved.

Community Employment Programme

Nowhere however is the issue of the need for a co-ordinated relationship between the arts sector and the youth education and training sector so self-evident as in the phenomenon of the Community Employment Programme (CE).

The extraordinary extent to which the arts have emerged and found funding, both at the professional and community/youth arts level in Ireland, under the terms of this scheme is only now becoming tacitly recognised.

The Community Employment Programme which aims to provide part-time work for the long-term unemployed (for those over 21 years of age) along with personal and skills development opportunities is now understood to provide a comparable level of funding to the arts as that of the Arts Council itself.

As outlined in Appendix 2(a) £12.6 million is the level of funding commissioned by FÁS to arts projects under its C.E. programme in 1995 of which £4.5 goes directly to theatre projects and of that, it is estimated that £2.62 million goes directly to community based drama initiatives - as distinct from professional production companies. It is estimated that the vast majority of these C.E. funded drama projects involve primarily young people aged under 25 years

This level of grant-aid alone is a clear indicator of the huge underlying interest in the community and particularly among young people in actively participating in drama. There is unquestionably though a complexity surrounding this development which is not arts policy led or monitored in any meaningful way and as such is, without question one of the most urgent drama issues in need of close study and deliberation in Ireland today.

Appendix 2(a) provides a more in-depth analysis of the C.E. programme and the related issues surrounding policy development, funding and co-ordination. As stated before, the evidence concerning the emerging role of the arts in education and training programmes for unemployed young people has now been categorically established. What has not been established, however - perhaps given the relative newness of

these initiatives - is the commitment of the State Agencies involved to bring their collective resources to bear, through carefully arranged partnerships and pilot studies aimed at bringing a coherent and integrated approach to such provision.

Young people are vital cultural beings, who at a time of socio-economic confusions, are without question at-risk and it seems only logical to point to the Arts, Education and Training policy makers that for them to remain in isolation to each other is a form of cultural neglect bordering on madness
ix

3. Drama and Cultural Equality

Alongside the youth drama/theatre work in the larger youth work and education/training sectors (as defined and outlined above) there is also a set of complementary practices emerging among distinct constituencies of interest that are worth briefly noting.

The arts and drama work have come to feature significantly as new means of learning and developing cultural identity among, in particular, marginalised communities such as people with disabilities, travellers and homeless or transient young people. In this respect the distinctive work and initiatives taken by such groups as VSA (Very Special Arts), Pavee Point and the Focus Point Agency are worthy of close study and support.

Another considerable area of drama innovation has been in the area of development education and its use by a range of organisations, not least VSI (Voluntary Services International), Comhlamh, Trócaire and others is again another example of the broad application of drama, outside of the larger sectors.

In both these fields the use of drama and theatre in addressing concerns centring on cultural equality and inter-cultural learning is proving particularly efficacious, but again, as instanced in earlier sections, is limited in scope due to lack of research, trained personnel and support systems available to it at present.

(i) *Wet Paint Arts is "a Dublin-based arts organisation concerned exclusively with the cultural and artistic lives of young people and children. Founded in 1984, it's primary concern has focused on the creation of a climate and framework within which a conjunction between young people's out-of-school lives and their creativity might be explored and developed. This has been pursued through a range of arts education, training and community-based projects organised through a range of partnerships" (from policy statement). The organisation is linked into a sophisticated set of networks of youth projects and organisations and is dedicated to databased and action research in the area of youth arts.*

(ii) *Comment from interview with youth arts worker*

(iii) *Making Youth Arts Work: Final Report of the National Youth Arts Committee 1993*

(iv) *ibid*

(v) *From interview with Youth Arts worker*

(vi) *The Public and the Arts, Clancy; Arts Council/Graduate Business Programme, University College Dublin 1994*

(vii) *Wet Paint: circulated position paper 199S.*

(viii) *Making Youth Arts Work: Final Report of the National Youth Arts Committee 1993*

(ix) *From interview with Youth Arts Worker*

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Introductory Note

Children's Theatre, Theatre-in-Education and Drama-in Schools are seen as being closely linked, while remaining separate in their methods and defining features. The Arts Plan 1995 - 1997 included a singular commitment by the Arts Council to improving and extending the quality of provision for the previously largely neglected section of Irish citizens who are under eighteen. While TIE has been around in Ireland for two decades and Dramalive - the organisation of teachers committed to drama in the school, almost as long, it is a truism to say that understandings around the cultural needs of children are only beginning to emerge in the Republic of Ireland in this decade. This understanding of cultural needs reflects a profound awakening in society to the complex world of the child in broad social, personal and legal terms, in recent years. The ill-fated Government White Paper on the Arts of 1987, Access and Opportunity, expressed commitment to the establishment of a professional children's theatre company and a professional young people's theatre company on a proper footing. Almost a decade later, no such initiative has been undertaken, although the establishment of The Ark cultural centre for children (see below) marks a milestone in progress.

This Review has had neither the resources nor, critically, the time to date, to conduct deep national research into these areas. The sections which follow, therefore, are little more than cursory - they are 'basic introductions' in description of the areas, included here above all to affirm the commitment of this Review to consider the needs of this audience and the practitioners serving it.

It is hoped, in the course of the consultations which follow this publication, to enter more fully into this complex world, looking particularly to the options for partnership brokerage with the key government department responsible for the lives of children, the Department of Education. It is intended to return to these areas at the time of the publication of 'Dialogues 1995-'96', the edited transcripts of the consultations, due for publication in the Spring of 1996.

Children's Theatre and Drama

The most significant development in the provision of theatre for children in this country in recent times is undoubtedly the completion and launch of The Ark' in Dublin's Temple Bar area. Hailed as the first cultural centre exclusively intended for children, in Europe, it has been welcomed by theatre practitioners, educationalists, community activists and the general public - especially the very young public who have subscribed in their thousands (35,000 to be precise) to the Telepoems project which was run by the Ark with sponsorship from Telecom Eireann.

The Director of The Ark has declared:

A six-year-old is not a third of an eighteen year old, or a quarter of a twenty-four year old. A six-year old is a fully formed six-year old - a citizen with needs, rights and a contribution to make. Theatre provision for children should not be about 'preparing a new audience for the future'. It should be about responding to the cultural needs of the child now.

The Ark does not simply provide an auditorium in which children can consume tailored performances (although its intimate performance space is the new envy of those adult practitioners and audiences who have visited it). It offers workshop facilities, play space and a child-friendly hospitable environment for creative exploration across a range of disciplines for the creatively active young person. Its impact on the cultural life of the country can only be speculated upon, as it has opened only in recent months. Given its intimate scale and its insistence on quality experience rather than mass throughput, it will certainly state and embody an already intuitively understood need for a much improved range of children's cultural facilities in other parts of Dublin city and across the country. A youth arts worker interviewed said:

The only danger which The Ark poses is that it will allow the planners to pat themselves on the back and say that's it now - that's the children looked after.

In the absence of a co-ordinated cultural programme for children at a national level, it has been left to independent companies, local festivals, community organisations and, in some cases, local authority arts officers, to provide for the out-of-school theatre and drama activities of children. Galway Arts Festival and Dublin Theatre Festival have run children's mini-festivals within their broad calendar of events in recent years, and festivals from Sligo to Kilkenny have catered for children in a responsible and creative way. Companies with commitment to community values have tended to focus in some measure on children as audience and workshop participants. These include: Theatre Omnibus from Ennis, who tour extensively; Macnas; Dry Rain the Bray Youth Theatre which has formed a children's company; Beg, Borrow and Steal, a community-based Dublin company focussed on children; Galloglass in Clonmel. This apparent wide spread disguises the absence of any thought through, focussed response to children as a full, year round audience, the idealism and commitment of the kind of companies mentioned notwithstanding.

Wet Paint Arts in Dublin with funding from Dublin Corporation's Community Department have run 'The Tribal Project' with children from five city districts over the past three years. A multi-media outdoor Summer project based entirely around the participation of children as active makers in a sophisticated identity quest through arts, this has culminated each Summer with a theatrical nightlight procession through the fields behind the Irish Museum of Modern Art, (which has been a partner body in hosting the programme). A documentary evaluation and information programme on this project, which has now concluded is being prepared and will be ready for wide dissemination in the Spring of 1996.

These are some of the headlines. This is a subject which will be returned to in depth.

(i) The Ark was initiated by Temple Bar Properties and is supported by the Department of Education, the Arts Council, FÁS, Dublin Corporation, and an array of private sponsors. It started programming in October 1995, hosting the Children's Season of the Dublin Theatre Festival.

Theatre-in-Education

While most extensively developed in the 20th Century, the uses of drama and theatre as methods of teaching have influenced education from the Greeks to the present. Because Drama-in-Education (see below) emphasises classroom improvisation, role play and simulation, it is often called process drama whereas TIE includes a product, a performance by a company or a team of actors...Both Drama-in-Education and Theatre-in-Education are motivated by the conviction that because human behaviour and institutions can be improved, it is the responsibility of the field to address contemporary concerns and issues.

The above is from notes to a TIE programme resource pack by the Director of the New York University Study Abroad Program in Educational Theatre, which has been located in Cork during the past two Summers.

TIE has been represented in Ireland by Graffiti Theatre Company in Cork since 1984 and by TEAM Educational Theatre Company, based in Dublin, since 1975. The occasion of TEAM's twentieth anniversary this year was marked by a two-day conference on Theatre-in-Education at The Ark, which focused attention on the issues facing the form in the coming years. A keynote address looked particularly at that company's development, its rehearsal, performance and workshop methodology, its commitment to excellence in writing and its future aspirations.

Graffiti was founded as a specialist TIE company, but in recent years has expanded its activities to cover a range of other theatre and drama programmes for young people including outreach, festivals and the ACTIVATE youth drama initiative, referred to earlier, under Youth Theatre.

In the last two to three years, a number of other initiatives have begun to emerge which fall either into or close to the TIE area. Kilkenny Theatre Project has initiated a substantial TIE programme. Very Special Arts, through its affiliate organisation in Ireland, the City Arts Centre, Dublin, runs a Young Playwright's Programme through secondary schools and youth projects, focusing on disability awareness; Sticks and Stones (Dublin) with the assistance of the Guilbenkian Foundation has run a schools drama programme focusing on bullying. There are a number of established companies whose programmes have focused on the young audience in an educational context but who do not fit the specific definition TIE. These are Second Age (Dublin) who present high quality curriculum-based drama for secondary school audiences; Storytellers (Dublin) whose work includes (among others) adapted novels from the curriculum, also aimed at secondary school audiences; and Iomhá Ildánach whose work has included adapted tales from Irish mythology presented in schools. Other companies or initiatives whose names appear in connection with drama work in schools include Down to Earth (Dublin and Galway); Sassafras (Waterford) and Tell Tale in County Cork (not to be confused with Telltale Children's Theatre in Dublin).

As emphasised in the preface to these pages, it has not been possible to research the area in any depth and the issues facing this sector will be returned to. A former Arts Council education officer has set some questions to this Review which might inform some of the discussion:

If TIE or drama-in-schools or venue-based productions of curricular texts are to function as the main experience of live theatre for young people during com-

pulsory education, then some measures have to be taken to ensure that this experience is of a high artistic and educational standard - relevant (as opposed to reduced or patronising), exciting, challenging and enjoyable. Poor standards and inappropriate work can only lead to a 'turn off effect'. Hence the need for some form of regulation. Many arts organisations regard schools as a 'captive audience' or readily 'exploitable' market without having the necessary understanding of the responsibilities involved in working in this area ...Regulation should not involve the creation of monopolies, however, and the Department of Education, the Arts Council and the organisations complex would need to develop means of ensuring high standards, monitoring and evaluation and the encouragement of new work. This in turn would involve laying down specific criteria and performance indicators for all aspects of theatre work for younger audiences.

Drama in Education

Drama in Education encompasses the study of Drama as an art form by young people in schools, and the study of aspects of the school curriculum through methodologies derived from drama. Theatre Studies programmes are primarily concerned with the study of the practices used in presenting Drama. While neither emphases are formally available to young people in the Republic of Ireland at present, individual teachers have been engaged in Drama in Education work during the past twenty years or so.

Dramalive, a teachers' study and support group including teachers at all levels of the education system, has been providing a valuable service for over twenty years, from its base in the Teachers' Centre, Drumcondra. Closely linked to the dynamics of the British Drama in Education movement, Irish practitioners assert the value of Drama in Education both as subject and methodology. The recently establishment of a Forum on Drama in Education builds on the work of the National Association of Youth Drama and Dramalive and provides a source of expertise on curricula and methodologies in the field.

The Arts Council actively supports the development of drama in the school curriculum, from infant level to pre-service and in-service teacher education. Since the early 1980s, bursaries have been made available to teachers proposing to develop expertise in this area, and schools have had the opportunity to apply to work with drama practitioners under the Artists in Schools scheme. More recently, the Arts Council has contributed to the funding of a one-year feasibility study on Drama in the Curriculum (Junior Certificate). An initiative of the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, the project was based at the Curriculum Development Unit (RCD/CDVEC). The Arts Council supported the attendance of a group of Irish practitioners at IDEA 95, the second conference of IDEA (International Drama Education Association) in Brisbane, Australia.

The Department of Education has indicated its clear support for the arts in the curriculum in the recently published White Paper, Charting Our Education Future. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has moved on its commitment to the development of syllabuses in Drama and Dance.

In a significant new move, the NCCA has invited the Arts Council to nominate a representative to its special consultative committee on Drama in Junior Certificate, which will report in June 1996. The Council has responded that:

in the spirit of partnership articulated in The Arts Plan 1995-1997, An Chomhairle Ealaíon is pleased to respond to this invitation.

The neglect of drama in the school-day life of young people in the Republic of Ireland has been the subject of many papers, articles and interventions at both arts and education conferences for a long time. This Review coincides with a perceptible optimism among practitioners and advocates that this neglect is soon to be reversed.

2 DRAMA AND COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY DRAMA

Community Arts is an area of human endeavour notoriously inhospitable to those who would seek to define it. The most significant gathering in over a decade of people themselves involved in Community Arts in Ireland expressed some frustration at their collective difficulty in agreeing definitions. Among delegates who returned a questionnaire evaluating their experience at the Arts and the Community Conference, held at Maynooth University in June 1995, there was

*consensus that... a definition of community arts is needed*ⁱ

A recent report on five pilot projects in which the contribution of community arts to community development was monitored and evaluated declared that

*although a large number of practical activities are advanced as examples of community arts there is probably more disagreement than agreement among their various proponents about what community arts actually is*ⁱⁱ

This report does not seek to arbitrate where such experts have failed to agree. For the purposes of this study, however, two distinct if interlinked types of drama activity are referred to as Community Drama and Drama-in-the-Community respectively

The former refers to drama activities originated within a group of people in a community where the core purpose of participation is enrichment through art, in the context of personal or community development. The second refers to the activities of professional companies and individuals who contribute to community cultural life by presenting tailored performances, animating workshops or involving non-professionals in collaborative creative processes using drama as the medium

In the former, it is members of a community themselves who initiate and 'make' the drama. In the latter, the community is an active partner, but the company has a remit (and usually an operational 'territory') which is greater than its involvement with any single community. It is useful, in this instance, to give two examples. An example of a Community Drama project might be a lone parents' group who devise a short performance about the pressures facing them and their children, which would then be performed for specialist audiences (police, social workers, other lone parent groups) and, if desired, to a general local audience. (This example is drawn from an actual case history of one suburban Dublin West group recorded and evaluated in 1991-'92. There are similar programmes elsewhere). An instance of Drama-in-the-Community might be a popular theatre company which arrives in a provincial town at the invitation of the local arts festival and conducts workshops with local people, bringing them to a level of interest, confidence and abandon where they agree to become an integral part of a performance which is given by the company the same evening. (This describes a particular case of a County Clare company visiting a County Cavan town in 1995).

Such examples illustrate but also greatly reduce the complexity of these activities. The former category does not confine its explorations and performances to literal social issues, and will often engage in aesthetically sophisticated theatrical experiment. The latter might also include organisations which locate themselves over months or years in a community, collaborating with local leaders on processes and projects. This Review recognises street theatre and spectacle as falling within the broad definition of theatre and notes that this form is particularly vibrant in the community area.

Description of Community Drama

As with Youth Drama, Community Drama is a process-based activity, where the quality of workshop based learning, communication, creative exploration and group interaction takes precedence over public presentation of plays. As with Youth Drama, performances are an important feature of Community Drama, but are viewed as integral to a much broader process.

Community Drama has been most in evidence among groups of people who for a variety of reasons could be described as disadvantaged or marginalised within society. It is closely linked with the broader social and educational practices of community development, and in some cases inextricably linked with community development infrastructures, although participants and leaders are adamant that the aesthetic element of their activities singles community arts activity out from other methods of community development. (The emphasis on 'Art' is as critical to their work as is the emphasis on 'Community'). Drama, sometimes as part of a broader programme of community arts activity, is seen as offering a set of languages, symbols and signals within and through which communities can explore, better understand and come to address issues which affect them.

Unlike Youth Drama, Community Drama in Ireland is not represented by a central organisation. There is no network of groups and there is a great variety of types of situations in which community drama occurs. Creative Activity For Everyone (CAFE) the umbrella body for community arts in Ireland does include within its vast database, information about community drama. CAFE initiated a Community Drama Festival in Dublin in 1991 and repeated the festival in partnership with the City Arts Centre in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, no festival was hosted, but instead, a meeting of community drama practitioners was convened with the aim of instituting a network or umbrella group to co-ordinate and represent the growing area of Community Drama in Ireland.

There are relatively few groups which could be described as self-standing (dedicated) Community Drama groups. The CAFE-convened meeting mentioned above attracted drama activists involved with community education groups, community youth projects, a parents alone resource centre and a drugs self-help project. Even where groups are devoted solely to drama activities, they will usually be linked into complex community networks locally.

CAFE insist that their database is by no means exhaustive and that the field is notoriously uncharted. According to their database, there are about 20 groups or organisations in Ireland which could, by the above guide, be described as community drama groups. They are mainly located in Dublin, with some peppered around the major regional cities and towns of Galway, Cork, Waterford, Wexford and Limerick. It is estimated however, that there are hundreds of community groups and adult education programmes in the coun-

try, including rural areas, which incorporate community drama into their activities. Until such time as a substantial audit of community arts is completed, it is not possible to quantify the activity accurately - and even then, given the amorphous nature of what is described and the intermixing of arts and media disciplines within projects - it will be difficult to determine precise levels.

Community Drama groups receive funding from various sources, including FÁS; the Department of Social Welfare Community Development Programme and, in some measure, local authorities. Combat Poverty has sourced Horizon funds from Europe for a major pilot programme in community arts, recently completed, which included drama (referred to below). The Arts Council is committed to community drama and provides artist in the community scheme funding to local groups (est. allocation to drama in 1994 was £7,000)

The main purpose of the 'Community Drama Review Day' hosted by C.A.F.E. was to define and articulate needs of groups and individuals in the field, and - through a process of description - to compare practice and share experience with peers. The outcomes reflected the double dimension of community drama, with the needs articulated in frank personal and social terms as well as in aesthetic and philosophical terms. The two principal needs of the groups were :

*Training: Skills training for participants; group skills for facilitators" and training for trainers, and:
The Establishment of a Network: This network would be specifically for community drama and would a) act as a resource for those active in the sector: b) look at policy and practice and c) heighten the profile of community drama.*

The question of 'needs' was also addressed from the point of view of how participation in drama programmes addresses personal and community needs. This ranged from 'sense of belonging; getting out of the house and away from a set of circumstances; building confidence; personal status within the community; and great buzz which gets passed on to the children' to 'educating local children and young people on drugs, joy riding, bullying, respect for older people; provision of theatre and entertainment locally; opportunity for people to develop skills and talents locally; and way of drawing community together'

Creative methodology and processes common to the groups included story-telling; improvisation; role play; research ; forum theatre techniques. Themes addressed in publicly presented work included 'relevant community issues, looking at power blocks, schools projects and programmes, conflict-emotions-silence, participants' experience'.

Much focus was placed on the responsibilities and needs of facilitators, who are deemed to need the following array of skills and personal qualities:

'Communication skills; an ability to listen actively; inter-personal skills; ability to control and direct energy; ability to create a relaxed atmosphere; promote equality; be non-judgmental, democratic, smiling, humorous, trustworthy, respectful of differences, recognise prejudice ... not to mention know everything there is to know about drama!'

Facilitators expressed the sense of isolation they feel and the aspiration to form a network was seen as a possible antidote in this. They see the work they do as unrecognised with-

in systems and structures and articulate the clear need for specific, highly specialised, accredited training and some standardisation of methods and rates of payment.

Value of Community Drama

The recently published Combat Poverty report 'Creating Connections' examines five pilot projects in detail, three of which are partly or primarily drama centred. From a starting-out perspective of 'the contribution of community arts to community development' this report concludes that

the essential elements of community arts relate to their capacity to enhance and improve the community development enterprise rather than as substantive and stand-alone entities. Community arts activities occupy a similar status and role as, for example, personal development activities, leadership training activities, information development activities and management development activities.'

Artists and participants active in the field would be unlikely to disagree with the intrinsic value of their activities to the development of the community. Most, however, would certainly disagree with the conclusion that arts activities 'occupy a similar status and role' as other non-art development activities.

A university lecturer/rainer in community drama interviewed, stated

There are many useful and effective ways of communicating and learning within community development. So why bother with drama, unless the point is to go beyond what other mechanisms can achieve, to a more aesthetic and creative experience

An essayist elsewhere in this report has identified 'identity' as a key 'spiritual' quest in the theatre.'" The 'Creating Connections' report gives over a section to community identity, finding that

the development of alternative cultural images is particularly important in the promotion of community identity ... The North Wall Women's Centre project reported that public performances by the Balcony Belles (local community drama group) in the local community centre had a major positive impact on the local community. There is always a large turnout for such performances and people talk about the shows for days afterwards. Local people are amazed that their own members can dramatise local affairs with such confidence.

This is an accolade most theatre-makers in Ireland would wish to receive, regardless of the forum or form within which they are presenting the drama, and it indicates a communal cultural enrichment which, while it has a decided place in community development, is unique and special to the performing arts.

Community Drama is not reviewed by critics, nor usually seen outside of its own context. Community Drama participants have consistently expressed the view that theatre criticism in the conventional sense is inappropriate, given the specialised and process-related

nature of the activity in its whole sense. Nonetheless, one Sunday newspaper did dispatch a critic to cover a community drama presentation by a West Dublin group in 1992, who concluded

The message was loud, clear and passionate. Not only was a lot of it enormously engaging to watch, but it confirmed that meaningful activity such as community theatre is a transforming agent of the most positive nature. The performers radiated a spirit and beauty that was infectious and memorable. For theatre of any category, that is surely what it must be about.^v

Drama-in-the-Community

Many professional theatre companies run some form of outreach or community programmes. Some, such as Galloglass in County Tipperary, identify this element of their work very clearly with the community arts movement and are connected into established community arts networks such as C.A.F.E.. Others take a more ad-hoc approach, with occasional shows lending themselves to particular kinds of interaction with communities.

A number of professional theatre organisations are recognised by the Arts Council as being comprehensively involved in drama-in-the-community and are funded either partly or wholly from the Community Arts sub-head within the new Multi-Disciplinary Arts category. These include: Macnas (Galway) who have established a community arts workshop and are heavily involved in local community arts training; Theatre Omnibus (Ennis) and Craic na Coillte (Clonakilty). The FÁS Community Employment programme provides funding to several community-based drama programmes all over the State, many of which would accord in some measure with the current definition of drama-in-the-community.^{vi}

While it would be an incomplete Review of Theatre in Ireland which did not take account of this vast area, it is almost impossible to consider community drama and drama in the community in isolation from other art forms. Organisations like Artquake in Monaghan, the Artsquads in Dublin and Beyond Borders in Donegal differing as they do from one another, all share a commitment to broadening the base of the arts, and drama is a critical part of this commitment. This activity, which, as the study into FÁS involvement in the arts (Appendix 1) shows, is an enormous growth area, creates an environment for theatre development in Ireland radically different to that which obtained ten years ago, and one which the combined statutory agencies and the professional theatre industry ought to be alert to.

Local Authorities through the Arts Officer structure have begun to play an increasing role in Community Drama development, especially outside of Dublin. The Arts Plan 1995-1997 advocates a stronger role in general for Local Authorities in this area. Given the impact of FÁS on the scene - the need once again for partnerships and co-ordination is evident.

- (i) *Arts and the Community, organised by City Arts Centre, Dublin, Creative Activity for Everyone (CAFE) and Combat Poverty, Maynooth University June 1995. Reference is from CAFE News, June/July issue, 1995*
- (ii) *Creating Connections - an exploration of the contribution of community arts to community development in five local projects. Combat Poverty 1995*
- (iii) *The term facilitator is used in community drama to describe the person who is engaged by the group to lead drama workshop activity and to guide the group dynamic.*
- (iv) *Helena Kaut-Howson: Flowers among the Ruins, this volume.*
- (v) *Diana Theodores. Sunday Tribune. April 1992.*
- (vi) *About 10 such groups estimated - source, FÁS research, (Appendix 1). Without detailed information about each group, it is impossible to distinguish between projects where the membership would be trained professionals whose work involves travelling and performing and leading workshops in community - in accordance with the definition above - and those which are essentially a training forum for inexperienced people, coming new to drama.*

DRAMA AND DISABILITY

The area of disability access has become a matter of considerable debate and action within the arts in Ireland. The Arts Council promotes a policy of access and has encouraged a number of disability arts initiatives and an active policy of requiring physical access in the buildings it funds.

Disability Arts, while it has been around in various guises in the past, is in its relative infancy in the Republic of Ireland, and not many initiatives in the area of disability have developed yet beyond early stages, although organisations such as the Mount Street Club, Muscular Dystrophy Ireland and the Centre for Independent Living - all with differing core aims, have embraced drama activities. Other instances of developing work in this area include programmes at Rehab and the Irish Epilepsy Association. The Disability Pride Parade in Dublin, organised by the Centre for Independent Living has included a colourful street theatrical element in recent years.

Two theatre initiatives are in receipt of Arts Council funding under its Disability Arts subhead. These are Pan Pan, a professional theatre and live art company (winners of the 1995 Dublin Theatre Festival Fringe Award) and Very Special Arts, of which City Arts Centre is the Irish affiliate, which runs, among many diverse programmes the Young Playwright's Programme - an educational, awareness raising programme using dramatic writing as a vehicle.

Inforum, the magazine of the Forum of People with Disabilities drew attention in an article in its Summer 1994 edition to the question of access to funded theatres, noting particularly that the National Theatre Society is in part inaccessible (the Peacock Theatre and the bar). The recently unveiled plans for the physical development of the National Theatre includes complete disability access, and the theatre hopes with this to reverse the regrettable legacy of an era when building codes in Ireland were inhospitable to sections of the community. Likewise the Gate Theatre is in the process of installing a lift into their eighteenth century building.

AMATEUR DRAMA

Introduction and general background

The amateur drama movement is one of the most widespread and enthusiastically supported activities in the arts area in Ireland. Each year about 800 amateur theatre groups provide activities for some 16,000 members, performing hundreds of plays, resulting in nearly 3,000 performances which are watched by over 400,000 people.

This activity is most in evidence in rural Ireland. Many people would never see a live drama performance were it not for the work of the amateur groups.

Drama festivals are a focal point in the rural life of many small towns and villages. With the input of professional adjudicators participating groups are encouraged to raise standards.

The Drama League of Ireland (formerly Amateur Drama League) is an organisation of drama groups, festivals and individuals with country-wide membership. It aims to develop and improve the standards of amateur drama in all aspects and to promote co-operation with other bodies involved in amateur drama. It also aims to develop links with the professional theatre. The Amateur Drama League provides direct representation for about 200 groups and indirect for as many as 500-600 other groups in organisations such as Macra Na Feirme, I.C.A., Foroige etc.

The DLI co-ordinates activities of groups and festivals at home and abroad, publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, has a library service of over 1,000 playscripts and undertakes weekend seminars and courses including the Maynooth Summer School which recently completed its 26th year. (It moved from its traditional camp in Gormanstown this year). The National Association for Youth Drama was established as a result of an Amateur Drama League initiative.

The other representative body in amateur drama, the Amateur Drama Council focuses its attention strongly on festival organisation, solely organising the 3 - act circuit

The ADL and the Amateur Drama Council jointly run a number of festivals. In recent times, there has been a significant degree of co-operation between these bodies resulting in some unity of purpose. Each of the two representative organisations sends six representatives to a co-ordinating body, the Drama Federation of Ireland (referred to below).

Through the Irish centre of the International Amateur Theatre Association, world-wide participation in conferences, seminars, workshops and festivals is co-ordinated. Groups and individuals have attended various festivals and workshops in many countries including the USSR, the USA, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, France, Holland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Canada.

Competitions and festivals are a key element of amateur drama activity. The All Ireland Confined Finals are confined to participation by groups from small centres of population and/or people who have not entered the open competition. The location of these Finals changes from year to year. The All Ireland Finals have been held for a great many years in Athlone and great interest is generated each year in the productions of the groups who qualify for the Finals at Athlone.

The Arts Council has encouraged and assisted the establishment and refurbishment of theatres and performance spaces in many centres throughout Ireland over the past decade including venues in Sligo, Limerick, Tralee, Tuam, Cork, Waterford, Kilkenny, Longford, Monaghan, Leitrim and Donegal. Amateur drama groups have benefited from the establishment and refurbishment of these venues as local groups have access to professionally-managed well-maintained buildings to present their productions and to have enhanced opportunities to see the work of professional theatre companies on tour.

Issues and concerns

The above outline is drawn from internal briefing notes in Arts Council documents, which in turn have been informed by submissions by the two main organisations which represent Amateur Drama in Ireland. These organisations would endorse and indeed reinforce the assertion that amateur drama is among the most - if not the most - widely enjoyed arts activities in the country. The findings of the Public and the Arts Report (1994) confirm the widely held acknowledgement of amateur drama's pride of place in Irish cultural life, finding that the vast majority of the population have attended an amateur drama production.

One Drama League of Ireland activist interviewed stated:

There are upwards of 1,000 groups active. We directly touch the lives of 5,000 6,000. Between September and May, just about every parish in the country has some drama going on.

While the base of the movement is voluntary and strictly speaking, no money changes hands, both the Amateur Drama Council and the Drama League of Ireland have made the case strongly that amateur drama makes a significant positive contribution to local and national economies. An Amateur Drama Council submission to the Arts Council stated:

The ADCI employs approximately 63 professional adjudicators both Irish and international annually. Up to 800 authors benefit annually with the benefit of substantial royalties. Our festivals contribute to the economies of 50 rural towns and communities through the supply of meals, drinks, petrol, hire of halls, transport, hire of vans, and lorries, phone calls and stationery. We also commission (extensive) printing, a considerable amount is spent on local radio and print media advertising. The organisation also gives employment to a big number of professional people each year for the purposes of giving courses and seminars to our members.'

The establishment of international links is a further area of achievement, not only through the work of the IATA, but now through a proposed close partnership between the Drama Federation of Ireland and its sister organisation in Wales. This programme will be supported by the E.U. Interreg programme and will have a considerable impact on tourism.

As well as all of this, amateur drama is seen by its proponents as a major contributor to the social life of the nation. In particular, smaller urban and rural communities benefit from this aspect of the activity, with social cohesion and community building an inevitable fall out of good drama practice.

Amateur drama has matured into the modern era in many ways. Despite a residual sense of injury in its attitude to the professional sector (some of whose members have been guilty of prejudice - often wrapped up in city rejection of rural values), the amateur movement is conscious of the need for sophisticated and complementary relationships with the professional sector, pointing not only to the fact that that amateur drama engages the services of professionals, but the fact that the two movements increasingly share resources (particularly venues) and technical personnel. The amateur movement can properly share the credit for the development of a range of high standard venues in the regions, now essential calling ports on major professional tours, many of which were initiated and some of which are maintained by local groups. This is an area where the Arts Council has enjoyed some common purpose with amateurs, having provided capital grant aid over the past decade to enable the building or refurbishment of such spaces.

Amateur drama proponents claim some credit for cultivating the theatre audience outside of Dublin, and they express strong views about standards and audience expectations. The training programmes and short-term courses, notably the Maynooth Summer School organised by DLI, encourage high standards and innovation among practitioners. Critical capacity is also enhanced by involvement, and amateur activists interviewed were forthcoming in their criticism of what is perceived as poor standards in the some quarters of professional sector

Some of the stuff that has been seen on tour in recent years is not up to the mark. It might sound like a cliché, but there is no question that some of the performances given by professionals on tour out here would not even feature in an adjudicator's summing up at a local festival. The same can be said about some of the productions. That being said, we have seen some top class work on tour too. But there should be standards.

The Arts Council's perspective is that only professional work of the highest standard will be considered for touring funding but points out that many tours are undertaken without Arts Council support and acknowledges that sub standard work may be presented in this way from time to time.

The greatest measure of sophistication is perhaps the capacity to be constructively self-critical and in this regard, the DLI's newsletter has broken ground recently with an article from the personal perspective of a long-time activist and senior figure in the movement, setting out the challenges facing individuals, groups and representative bodies into the future.

Comparing like with like, the article looks to other major amateur movements in Ireland, notably in the sporting arena, stating that

in terms of professional organisation, we are miles behind the GAA, ICA and MACRA... There seems to be organisational weakness, lack of coherence, little or no stated policy, little sense of direction and we do not enjoy the kind of public profile such large involvement and such long tradition deserve.

The same article analyses the relationship between amateur drama and the Arts Council:

The Arts Council regards amateur drama as... important.. but it only vaguely knows what the amateur drama movement needs or wants. There is no clear or

regular line of communication. That is not to say there is or should be 'a pot of gold' - there is a long queue of more deserving, often impoverished, professional artists. Apart from funds we need to be involved in policy formulation.

The article is emphatic about this question of policy awareness, calling on festivals and groups to organise debate and evaluation 'from which emerge good policy, good plans and good development.'

The Arts Council's acknowledgement of the value of amateur drama is mentioned above and is implicit in its inclusion in this Review. The development of regional venues and the support for preferential rates of rental offered by some of the Arts Council supported arts centres to amateur groups indicates the Council's commitment to infrastructural development. Questions such as relationships and supports to the representative bodies is kept under review, as is the question of supports to the professional input to recognised summer schools and other training areas.

The DLI points to the fact that amateur drama representative organisations are funded in many other European nations, even where government subsidy does not extend to funding amateur performing groups directly. Their partner bodies in Netherlands, Denmark and most pertinently perhaps, Wales, receive such supports.

As with most other areas of theatre in Ireland touched upon in this report, the demand for recognition, status and input to policy has become as significant to the amateur movement as crude calls for cash. Some investment in structures is called for. In a broad sense the development of a healthy environment for growth, sound policy, international linkages and continued pride of place in community life in Ireland is understood as the key need.

(i) Submission to The Arts Plan 1995 - 1997

STUDENT DRAMA

There is little research but an abundance of legend surrounding student drama in Ireland. No Theatre Review would be complete without reference to the venerable tradition of drama societies in the universities. Trinity Players in Trinity College Dublin is 64 years old, and many of the luminaries of the contemporary stage in Ireland passed through its stage door or through the portals of the drama societies of University College Dublin; St. Patrick's College, Maynooth; University College, Cork or University College, Galway. The Irish Student Drama Association in recent years has also embraced the societies of the newer universities, Dublin City University and the University of Limerick. ISDA is an 'all-island' association with membership in Belfast and Coleraine and has for many years been a significant promoter of North-South cultural exchange.

Third level colleges see other manifestations of drama, through the drama activities of the modern language and Irish language societies, which have been breeding grounds in the past for some of today's more experimental visual and physical theatre proponents. The theory that the difficulties of overcoming language barriers to understanding has promoted occasions of more adventurous symbolism among such societies is again a matter of legend, but is widely held.

The importance of student drama has waxed and waned over the decades, and to some extent, with the emergence of an active professional independent sector since the mid-eighties and the development of professional theatre training institutions in Ireland, its role as both a breeding ground and a surrogate for fringe theatre activity in Ireland has declined since the 1970's and early '80's. Nonetheless, the ISDA Festival remains one of the key drama events in the annual calendar and student drama is still one of the key entry points not only to theatre career-making, but critically, to the development of audience.

There are no statistics on numbers of members, numbers of performances or numbers of attendance, and this Review is not well placed to speculate on these. Trinity Players has an on-the-books membership of over 1,000, of which about 200 are said to be 'relatively active' and a core of about 40 'constantly active'. The 1,000 named members might give an indication of a core audience base, as an attraction of membership is reduced admission rates to certain shows. Players, like Dramsoc at UCD hosts several productions per annum - usually two separate daily productions each week of term time. The other colleges range from one per annum to about one per month. Material varies, as the ISDA programme indicates, from often highly innovative new writing and devised work to presentations of classic work from the college curriculum (which tends to do best at the box office).

College societies have moved with the times, away from simply staging plays to offering workshops to members and non-members, often calling upon external professionals for inputs. They are a valuable experience-gaining ground for technical workers and budding designers.

With the growth of university drama departments and drama options on English, Irish and modern language courses, there is often a symbiotic relationship between societies and the departments, although the societies guard their independent identities and resources with some vigour. One student interviewed stated that as a student in the drama department she valued the Society:

for the opportunity to make drama among students from other walks of life. The Maths student or the English student will have a completely different feel for the theatre than those of us who are studying drama and immersed in it as an academic preoccupation.

Student drama plays a significant role in the social lives of young people in colleges. It is another important sector to be borne in mind in the quest to develop a future audience and talent and skills base for theatre in Ireland.

Appendix I: Learning Lines

Training for Careers in the Theatre

Introduction

Training is referred to several times throughout this report, with the need for co-ordinated approaches to professional industry training - as well as the specific training needs in community and youth drama - referred to within the relevant sections. This Appendix is concerned with career training for the professional theatre and it simply sets out something of the range of options currently available to young people wishing to enter the theatre (or indeed existing practitioners who might wish to re-train or further train).

This Appendix also tests attitudes among a random sample of professional practitioners, surveyed by postal questionnaire on their experience of training in Ireland.

There is no co-ordinated Training Plan for the professional theatre in Ireland, nor is there any integrated infrastructure involving professional bodies, state agencies and colleges. The most optimistic development in recent times in this regard has been the Cultural Sector Forum which addressed broad vocational training needs in the arts in general. The recommendations of its report (September 1995) include:

to forge strong links between arts/cultural organisations and education/training providers and policy makers

to establish cross sectoral strategic partnerships between groups that have traditionally not engaged

to develop a sound training infrastructure thus meeting education/training needs that are not presently met and ensuring continued growth in the sector

The report also proposed a national audit to widen the knowledge base of the sector and called for training which reflects the specific nature of the sector ('nomadic and multi-disciplinary'). The Forum was committed in its study to questions of access, parity of esteem and the concept of lifelong learning. The Cultural Sector Forum was convened under the auspices of the Mainie Jellet Project which receives assistance from the Department of Arts Policy and Management at City University London. It had no formal remit, but was unique and encouraging in its make-up and membership as well as its broad recommendations. The members included representatives of The Arts Council; City of Dublin V.E.C.; Gaiety School of Acting; RTE; Frontier Films; MusicBase; FAS; the Artists Association of Ireland; Mel Bradley Ltd. and the Mainie Jellet Project.

Theatre Training Options

Full-time Training

Two universities, one private school and six VEC (Vocational Education Committee) colleges offer two or one year full-time training in drama in Dublin and a further 3 VEC colleges offer full-time courses outside of Dublin. Some details are set out here:

Dublin

Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College Dublin

Course(s) offered: Trinity College offers a 2-year Diploma in Drama and Theatre Studies; a 4-year degree course in Drama and Theatre Studies and also drama as part of a two-subject moderatorship (i.e. one of two subjects taken on a degree programme - students do three or four years, depending on which of their two subjects they choose as their major). Note: From 1996-'97 on, the Diploma Course will be replaced by a new three year degree course.

Entry requirements: Diploma : Audition & interview, no specific educational qualifications required. / Degree courses: Leaving Certificate and Central Applications Office requirements followed by interview.

Numbers: On the Diploma course for 1994/5 there are 10 people for year one and 11 for year two. / On the single honour degree course there are 15 people in first year and 36 people distributed between second, third and fourth year. / On the two subject moderatorship course there are 10 first years and 39 people between second, third and fourth year.

Fees: For the Diploma course: £2,190 p.a. or if the student qualifies for a Government waiver £1170. For the Degree courses £1,772 or under Government waiver £961. Note: From 1996-'97, university fees for degree courses in the Republic of Ireland will be abolished.

Certification: Diploma / Degree as indicated above.

University College Dublin

Course(s) offered: M.A. course in Modern Drama Studies - a one year drama programme for those interested in pursuing modern drama studies at an advanced level

Entry requirement: Applicants are required to have the normal qualifications for entry to an MA degree. However other University graduates with qualification deemed equivalent may also be considered for admission.

Numbers: Currently 12 students but they have facility for up to 40. Low numbers this year attributed to move to new campus accommodation. Anticipated that higher complement will be attained in 1996-1997.

Fee: £1391. Financial assistance/scholarships are not available

Certification: Post graduate degree in modern drama studies.

UCD now offers a B.A. Degree in Drama Studies as an evening course. See under parttime training.

Gaiety School Of Acting

Course(s) offered: 2 year full time course in intensive acting.

Entry requirement: No academic qualifications are needed. Entry onto the course is by application and audition.

Numbers: There are 21 students starting the 1995 term, and 19 starting the second year.

Fee: £2,500 per annum There are 2 scholarships available. The E.S.B. scholarship covers the full cost of one student's fees for one year. The Harold Charles Moscow Award is given to a second year student to assist them in paying their fees.

Liberties College (Bull Alley) V.E.C.

Course(s) offered: 2 year PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) Drama Studies course.

Entry Requirement: Leaving Cert standard and audition

Numbers: 25 per year

Fee:£130

Certification: Certificate in Drama Studies (NCVA)

Colaiste Dhulaigh

Course(s) offered: 2 year (PLC) course in Drama Studies.

Entry Requirement: Leaving Cert standard and audition

Numbers: 20 per year

Fee:£90

Certification: Certificate in Drama Studies (NCVA)

Inchicore Vocational School

Course(s) offered: 2 year (PLC) course in Drama Studies.

Entry Requirement: Over 17 years; Leaving Cert standard. Interview & audition.

Numbers: Approx. 35 places.

Fee: £150

Certification: Certificate and Diploma examinations of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, London. Students also take school-based exams.

College of Commerce, Dundrum

Course(s) offered: 1 year (PLC) course in Drama Studies, (est. 1995)

Numbers: 20

Fee: None

Certification: Certificate in Drama Studies (NCVA) and VEC Diploma

Senior College, Ballyfermot

Course(s) offered: 1 year (PLC) course in Performing Arts.

Numbers: 20 (approx.)

Fee:£95

Certification: VEC certificate

Marino V.E.C.

Course(s) offered: 1 year (PLC) course in Drama Studies.

Numbers: 40

Fee:£180

Certification: Certificate in Drama Studies (NCVA)

Outside Dublin

Bray VEC

Course(s) offered: 2 year PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) course in Performing Arts (Performance, production studies, scriptwriting and video) (est. 1995).

Numbers: 40

Fee: Information not available

Certification: Diploma in Performing Arts (NCVA)

Coláiste Stiofán Naofa, Cork

Course's offered: 1 year (PLC) course in Drama Studies

Numbers: 20 (approx.)

Fee: £80

Certification: VEC certificate

Central Technical Institute, Waterford

Courses offered: 1 year (PLC) course in Drama Studies (est. 1995)

Numbers: 20 (approx.)

Fee: None

Certification: VEC certificate

Note 1: The Theatre Review contacted all 36 Regional VECs to establish where PLCs had been established. Because of confusion in some of the correspondence between 'drama' courses and performing arts' courses, some of the information was unclear. However, it is understood that the above information gives the comprehensive picture. 3 VECs indicated that drama courses had been offered but had either no or insufficient take-up. These were Monaghan and Westmeath (no take-up) and Kilkenny (insufficient).

Note 2: The above study does not cover VTOS (second level education for adults) of which there are a number which focus on performing arts. including Rossa College, Skibbereen, Co. Cork and a number of others in Dublin and elsewhere.

Part-time training

Part-time acting courses of various kinds have been around in various Irish towns and cities for a long time, providing an introduction to the joys of drama to many - some of whom went on to pursue further training and careers in theatre, others who used the experience to enhance their amateur drama work. These have ranged from individual Speech and Drama tuitions to privately run academies to evening courses at local community educational institutions. In recent years, particularly in Dublin, a number of structured, foundation and pre-career part-time courses have been available. The following is an incomplete but representative range of the more established courses.

University College Dublin

Commencing 1995, UCD offers a modular B.A. Degree in Drama Studies, taken by evening (2 nights a week). Entry is as usual for university degree programmes. Leaving Certificate, however the high number of mature students expressing interest in the programme has led to flexibility around the entry requirement. Mature students without a previous degree are required to take a one year foundation course. The course itself is over two years. Students with an existing degree - particularly those with a modern language - may join at second level. This makes the course attractive to secondary school teachers wishing to gain drama skills for classroom drama programmes. The course offers a mix of practical and theoretical approaches to drama.

Gaiety School Of Acting

The Gaiety School runs a 1 year part time foundation course in acting. This runs 2 evenings per week and is designed to give participants an opportunity to seriously explore aspects of drama training prior to making a commitment to full time training. The cost is

£880. The GSA also runs an Introduction to Drama course. This is one night per week for 10 weeks and is designed for those with a general interest in drama but also for those who wish to expand their general communication skills. The cost is £150.

St. Patrick's University College, Maynooth (Extra-mural Studies)

2 year part time Theatre Studies course. The course covers three weekend sessions and fourteen evening sessions for year one. The cost is £370 for year one and £350 for year two.

Dublin School Of Acting

Diploma in Drama Studies. This part time course runs for 2 years every Saturday and Sunday for 10 hours per week. The course is designed for those who wish to pursue a career in the theatre professionally. The total cost for the 2 years is £1,650. (£825 per year)

Betty Ann Norton Academy

Courses for adults: 1 year speech and drama (certificate) course; 1/2 year advanced acting course; and 2/3 year diploma course (Guildhall, London). Cost £690.

Leinster School Of Music

Leinster School Of Music runs a Solo Acting course of 1 night a week for one year. Prices range from £65 to £85 depending on grade.

Dublin Institute of Technology, Cathal Bmgha Street

Creative Drama course running 1 night a week. The class is for 3 hours from 6 - 9 on a Tuesday evening.

Royal Irish Academy Of Music

1 year part time course, every Saturday, broken down into 18 weeks per semester for two semesters. £120 per semester.

Andrews Lane Theatre

A part time course in acting runs for 8 weeks. The classes are held every Saturday and the cost is £195.

The Actors Workshop

Beginners, Advanced Beginners and Intermediate classes: 10 week programmes. 12 per group. Cost £100.

Training Abroad

It is understood that a number of Irish people are training in drama overseas, but for obvious reasons, statistics on this are difficult to assemble. The Theatre Review surveyed the 18 theatre training institutions in Britain which are recognised by the National Council for Drama Training (NCDT) which is associated with British Equity, to seek to establish how many Irish students had enrolled with them, this year. Three colleges were unable to provide information. Of the 15 which did, 11 have Irish students. A total of 22 Irish students were located between the 11 schools. The survey located only one Irish student following an accredited stage-management course in Britain.

The Arts Council through its bursary awards system, encourages Irish practitioners to avail

of training opportunities abroad which they would not have access to in Ireland. The most significant of these awards to date has been a bursary of £6,000 in 1995 to a leading young actor to pursue advanced studies in the art of the clown at the Jacques Le Coq School, the leading such institution in Europe, located in Paris. The Arts Council's bursaries have also recently been extended to assist Irish people to avail of the training which is on offer in Ireland, a move which has been much welcomed in the profession.

The above is a thumbnail sketch of training opportunities available to people in the Republic of Ireland, wishing to pursue careers in theatre. The focus has been almost exclusively on actor training or general - more theoretical - drama training which can encourage directors, writers etc. Apart from actor training very little is available in terms of course-based theatre training. The National College of Art and Design and Dun Laoghaire College of Art and Design offer general design programmes which include elements of stage and audio-visual design. UCD and UCG offer arts administration courses. Stage, production, prop-making etc. are learned in-company mostly. Macnas have been to the fore in offering in-house training. The need for an industry-led review of training needs is already stated elsewhere.

Attitudes to and Experiences of Training

The survey below explores attitudes among a small sample of practitioners.

29 actors were included in a postal survey." A few points need to be stated at the outset. The actors were chosen by a random selection method, using the full list of union members, licence holders and permit holders (provided kindly by Irish Actors Equity). Of 70 written to, 29 responded (41 %). Whether the low response rate reflects the transience among the younger workforce and lack of reliability of the mailing list, or a degree of indifference among actors to surveys and questions of training/development/infrastructure, is a matter of speculation. One way or another, the survey loses some value by virtue of the fact that no graduate of the Samuel Beckett Centre features among the 29 actors. 3 graduates from the Gaiety School of Acting responded. Other training schools listed above which feature in the survey include the Dublin School of Acting and Inchicore VEC. Many of the respondents were of more than six years standing in the business, having commenced their careers prior to the emergence of the current range of training options. The institutions which are referred to by the more experienced practitioners include: The Oscar Theatre School; the Brendan Smith Academy; the Grapevine Arts Centre; the Focus Stanislavski Studio and the Abbey School of Acting. Of those, only Focus continues to function as a training forum for actors. A much wider pool of actors would be required to elicit a truly comprehensive picture of the attitudes and in particular to evaluate training in Ireland. This Review had neither the time nor resources to engage in a workforce-wide survey of practitioners. Our small sample, however, does yield some useful information and tendencies.

(Note: where percentages total less than 100%, this is due to questions being left unanswered or answers being unclear.)

Training level

Of 29 actors, recognised as professionals by Irish Actors Equity:

*7 (27%) received full-time training in Ireland;
12 (41%) received part-time training in Ireland;
4 (14%) received professional training outside Ireland;
6 (21%) received no formal training (but gained some experience in amateur, student or youth drama or underwent apprenticeship).*

Of the 7 who received full-time training in Ireland, 3 trained full-time for one year only; 2 for two years and 2 for more than two years.

Of the 19 who received some training in Ireland, four went on to pursue further training outside of Ireland. Three people indicated that they had undergone 'apprenticeship'. All three were more than twenty years in the business.

Among those who received some formal training there was no discernible difference in nature or duration of training between more recent and more experienced practitioners. 79% of actors, regardless of age or experience, had undergone some formal training over at least one part-time year.

Certification

Of the 19 actors who received some formal training in Ireland, eight (42%) received certificates and eleven (58%) did not.

Mid-career re-training

Of 29 actors in the full sample, since commencing their professional careers:

*None (0%) returned to full-time training;
3 (10%) returned to part-time training;
15 (52%) have continued to attend occasional workshops (8 have attended 3 workshops or fewer per annum while 7 have attended more than 3 per annum)*

14 Actors (48%) indicated that they had received further training in the course of working with professional companies.

Value of Training

Of the 19 actors who received some training in Ireland. 17 (89%) said their training was either "adequate" or "very relevant" to the work they have undertaken since completing training.

When asked whether the course(s) they had attended had been "a well designed preparation for the range of employment opportunities now available in theatre in Ireland", 15 (78%) said the course(s) had been either "adequate" or "well designed" (although only 2 (10%) of those opted for "well designed").

Only one person found the training they had received “not relevant” and two found it “not well designed” to prepare them for careers in Ireland.

When asked if potential employers “adequately understood” the training they had received, none of the 19 answered “yes”. 20% of the sample indicated that, in general, potential employees did not “adequately understand” the training they had received. The majority, 58%, said it varies.

84% were of the opinion that training was viewed as “of less importance than work experience” by potential employers, 10% thought training and experience were seen by employers as of equal value. None believed that employers consider training more important than work experience.

Employment success rate

Over the past three years, of the full sample of 29 actors, 18 (62%) had been employed “regularly” or “fairly regularly” (5-11 months per annum); 2 (10%) had been employed occasionally (2 - 5 months) and 8 (27%) had been in work less than two months per annum. There was no discernible difference between those with and without formal training. Of 6 who had never received formal training, only 1 had been in work less than 2 months per annum, whereas 5 had been in work between 5 and 11 months per annum.

Over the full sample, age and number of years’ experience appeared to be significant factors affecting employment success, as much as training levels.

Despite its irregular nature, theatre appears to be the most significant area of employment. Of the 29 actors in the sample, 17 (58%) have worked either exclusively or mainly in theatre, as against 7 (27%) who worked mainly in television or film. 2 (10%) indicated that radio was their main source of employment.

Attitudes to quality of training

Returning to the 19 actors who received some training in Ireland, 16 (87%) indicated that there were specific areas of their training which were inadequate to the needs of their work. The most commonly listed were; film training (10); dialects (7); television (6); movement (5) and career guidance (5).

When asked to indicate areas in which their training was of a high standard, the majority (12) chose improvisation. Other elements which were to the satisfaction of the respondents were: voice (7) and textual analysis (7). Movement, which was selected as inadequate by 6 (see above) was seen by 7 others as of a high standard. Those who were satisfied with movement training tended to be those who have trained within the past ten years.

Barriers to Full Training

When asked to grade, in order of significance, a list of five possible factors which might have been barriers to their receiving full training at the time of entering the profession:

33% indicated that “quality training courses were beyond their financial means”;

33% indicated that the course they chose “was good in some regards but did not cover key areas”;

23% indicated that “the belief was prevalent that one did not require training to work as a theatre professional”;

19% indicated that the course they chose was of “a generally low standard”; and only

10% indicated that “there were no quality training courses in Ireland”

Re-training/Further Training:

90% of the sample of 29 said that they believed “more during-career learning/re-training opportunities should be available”.

When asked which of a list of retraining options they would personally be most likely to avail of, the actors graded the options given as follows:

- first preference:
regular once-off (1-5 days) workshops in specific areas;
 - second preference:
scholarships/bursaries to attend full-time courses outside Ireland;
 - third preference:
regular, short, full-time courses (of three months max.) in specific areas;
 - fourth preference:
a one- or two-year part-time course in Ireland at an affordable price;
 - fifth preference:
a one- or two-year full-time further training course in Ireland at an affordable price
- (i) *Cultural Sector Forum Report: Vocational Arts Education and Training, (1995) Mainie Jellet Project; 148 Mourn Road, Drimnagh, Dublin 12. (See also Appendix 2a) on FÁS.*
- (ii) *A further 19 professionals in other areas of ‘the business’ replied to a similar survey - but the diversity of those represented (directors, administrators, stage-hands) provided information too varied to be of value. A much larger survey would be needed to establish genuine trends. This Review had not the resources for such a study*

Appendix 2: State Interventions

Some notes on the roles of selected statutory funding bodies with regard to theatre in Ireland

(a) FÁS

Background

Forás Áiseanna Saothair, (FÁS), The Employment and Training Authority, was established in January 1988, under the Labour Services Act 1987. Its functions include the operation of training and employment programmes; the provision of an employment recruitment service; and advisory service for industry; and support for co-operative and community based enterprise.

The Board membership comprises representatives from trade unions, employer, social welfare, education and youth interests, together with representatives from the Departments of Finance and Enterprise and Employment, and employee representatives.

FÁS and Arts Funding

FÁS has no particular statutory role with regard to funding the arts. However, in the mid 1980's its predecessor organisations. National Manpower Services, the Youth Employment Agency and ANCO, the Industrial Training Authority, began the now embedded practice of supporting arts and cultural projects through approving short-term employment schemes and training programmes in this area of work.

In a Theatre Ireland interview in 1987, the manager of a Dublin-based theatre company declared:

/ can tell you why many of the smaller (theatre) companies have got off the ground. The main reason is labour grant schemes, and the fact that in 1985 they got applied to people over twenty five. Literally overnight, four or five major initiatives happened in this town as a result.'

The Social Employment Schemes and Teamwork schemes of the 1980's have been replaced by Community Employment. It is under the auspices of the Community Employment Programme that by far the most significant part of FAS intervention into arts in Ireland in the mid-nineties occurs, and this paper concerns itself only with this dimension of FAS funding. (There have also been External Training Agency programmes, Enterprise Programmes and others. This appendix will focus mainly on Community Employment. The incorporation of arts programmes into Community Theatre Workshops is referred to in Section 1 b) on Youth Drama.)

Figures due to be published soon will verify that FÁS have committed almost £12.6m. via Community Employment into arts projects in Ireland in 1995.

It has never previously been possible to extrapolate figures for art and culture funding via FÁS, as the arts have not previously been treated as a separate finance category by the Department of Labour. The current figures have been arrived at following an intensive research programme carried out on behalf of the Arts Council, in partnership with FÁS” who have now begun to identify arts programmes as a matter of procedure.

The fact of the close co-operation of both agencies in the research process can be viewed as the beginnings of a liaison between the two bodies, as advocated in the Arts Plan 1995-1997 - a dialogue which was signalled as far back as the Art of Managing the Arts Conference at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 1991.”

In arriving at the precise figure of £12,641,164, arts expenditure via Community Employment, the Arts Council researcher isolated only those projects whose main activities would be recognised as Arts by the Arts Council, guided by the definitions set out in the Arts Act of 1951 and recent standing orders.

The figures do not include local heritage or environmental projects for instance, unless they are clearly led by an arts programme.

On the face of it these figures are of great significance. The Arts Council which is the statutory body for the promotion of the arts in Ireland operates to a total budget from Government of £16.25m (working figure for 1995). It retains 6 - 7% of its allocation to run its own administration. The amount, therefore, that will be expended externally by the Arts Council in grant-in-aid to artists and arts organisations in 1995 is £15.2m. This is just £2.6m higher than the amount invested by FÁS Community Employment into the arts. FÁS matches Arts Council direct funding to the arts at a rate of 83%.

The total FÁS expenditure on arts is nonetheless a relatively small percentage of that organisation’s overall expenditure on Community Employment. FÁS will invest a total of £225m in Community Employment in 1995. In percentage terms, therefore, the arts will receive less than 6% of total Community Employment allocation this year.

It should be pointed out at the outset that the money spent by FÁS on arts development is spent by them in pursuit of their own objectives in relation to creating temporary employment opportunities of high quality and providing personal and professional development opportunities for unemployed people, rather than arts development per se. They have recognised the value of the arts in this regard, but it is not within their statutory remit to have an arts policy.

Attitudes to FÁS in the Arts Sector

Recent conferences on the arts in Ireland have focused closely on the role of FÁS. Much of the debate has centred on the positive changes in FÁS schemes and the significant financial contribution which FÁS now makes to the arts. Concern, on the other hand, has been expressed at the high level of dependence on FÁS funding which now underpins the arts in Ireland.

Criticisms of FÁS involvement focus on the absence of specialist arts expertise within FÁS staffing structures, the absence of arts advisory panels or other monitoring mechanisms

and the absence of a dialogue between FÁS and the Arts Council (although this is now being addressed). As well as this, there are long-standing concerns about the use of temporary labour and training schemes to provide core staffing to essential arts service providers such as arts centres. The Scheme Workers Alliance has also addressed with FÁS, such questions as employee rights etc. which apply not only to the arts but to all areas of employment where short term programmes are used.

At the conclusion of the conference on The Regional Development of the Arts in Cork in 1995 it was noted that

FÁS schemes arose in almost every session. How comfortable are we with FÁS schemes? How well do they serve the people whom they are supposed to be training for work?... Do FÁS schemes serve the artist? Do they serve the public and do they serve the arts?... I think all of these questions can only be answered in the context of a new analysis of the role of FÁS and that must mean better liaison between the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, the Arts Council and the FÁS organisation itself.^{iv}

FÁS has indicated a welcome capacity to respond to the problems outlined by arts and other organisations which have used schemes over the past decade. They were one of the statutory organisations represented on the Cultural Sector Forum, a grouping made up of representatives of the cultural sector and relevant statutory bodies to consider improved mechanisms and better co-ordination for vocational arts education and training in Ireland. (Report published September 1995).^v

FÁS have also introduced mechanisms to encourage high standards, including the Community Initiative Awards introduced in 1993. The award for excellence in the Heritage and Environment category has been won by an arts project in 1993, 1994 and 1995.

The Community Employment scheme is widely held to be better geared towards the needs of individual scheme workers than its immediate predecessor, the Social Employment Scheme. The most important innovations have been the option to extend beyond 12 months to a second year of employment although this fluctuates with national expenditure limitations, and the move from straight-forward part-time employment to employment-based training. Participants now receive formal modular training while engaged on schemes. Scheme supervisors in turn receive training, and back-up and provide evaluation, in order that schemes aspire to high, modern, person-centred models of career and personal learning.

The Community Employment Programme was endorsed by some of those who spoke at the conference on the Regional Development of the Arts in Cork.

I think these FÁS projects, if used wisely and carefully by their administrators, can be used in an extremely positive way and not as the kind of indoor relief for the unemployed that they used to be. There is development within FÁS. I found a great deal of understanding within FÁS.^{vi}

For individuals on well-run Community Employment schemes, the innovations have been of considerable benefit. For many arts organisations the new funding available and encouragement to provide a liberal training programme has been accepted as progressive.

The new system particularly suits community arts organisations where the ethos and core purpose of the arts programme is usually tied into the personal development and enrichment of the participants.

Conversely, and ironically. Community Employment is considered less attractive than SES among those arts organisations which see themselves primarily as service providers without an in-house education or training objective. In the 1980s, many arts organisations, including many theatre companies, engaged short-term employees on schemes to run core services because they neither had the core arts funding nor sufficient generated income to allow them to employ staff directly”” For organisations who have utilised schemes in this way simply to staff their operation, the additional bureaucracy of the new Community Employment scheme, coupled with the imposed requirement to develop an educational programme not organic to their own objectives, has made the ethically problematic but expedient recourse to short-term employment schemes less attractive.

The core issue remains. Many theatre organisations and arts centres continue to rely on schemes for essential staffing. Some have adapted with imagination to the challenge, placing the employees’ welfare at the centre of their human resource management while still running a vibrant external operation. Others see Community Employment as a cumbersome mechanism which adds to their administrative burden. There is general agreement that essential staffing should not be left to short-term in-training employees, whatever the ethos of the organisation.

FÁS Funding of Theatre

Just as it was difficult for the Arts Council’s researcher to pin down precise borderlines in identifying bona fide arts projects, so it is difficult to pin down the drama/theatre proportion of FÁS contribution to the arts.

Many FÁS-funded community resource programmes involve education and workshop activities across a range of arts disciplines. The ‘Artsquad Model’ (after the original Dublin City Artsquad initiative) where professional artists are employed on schemes to animate local community arts projects, festivals, training programmes etc. by going in and collaborating short-term with local activists, will often have musicians, creative writers, craft workers and drama tutors all on their books at the same time. These, along with overhead and staff costs of Arts Centres, have been excluded from the tables below.

The figures shown below, comparing FÁS funding of drama with Arts Council funding on a national and regional basis, are based on 1995 projections. In collaborating with the Arts Council on this research, FÁS emphasised the difficulty of giving precise figures for the current financial year, as there is some fluctuation at project level. Places not taken up on schemes as well as varying income allowances for individuals, depending on their marital status etc., can cause fluctuations above and below a projected subsidy line. Nonetheless, the figures here can be taken as close estimate of the current situation.

Table A sets out figures covering all areas of funded drama activity, including professional theatre venues, theatre companies, theatre training organisations, street spectacle groups and community drama programmes. The total funding by FÁS to these combined areas of drama in 1995 is £4,495,472. The Arts Council’s total drama budget in 1995 is

£5.5m . To compare like with like, however, it is appropriate to add in that proportion of the Arts Council's community arts budget which goes to drama and street spectacle, but to take out funding to North/South initiatives and awards to individuals. This again is difficult to extrapolate precisely, but the amount spent from Community and Disability Arts budgets on drama is estimated at £195,000. Using this somewhat indiscriminate framework, the Arts Council can be said to fund drama activity in the Republic of Ireland to the sum of £5,518,800 in the current year.

It emerges that FÁS can be said to match Arts Council funding for drama at a rate of 81.5%. Table A shows this comparison in national terms.

Table A

Funding to Drama Projects Nationally

(including professional theatre and community drama)

Projected Figures for 1995

	• Arts Council funding to Drama (including community drama) £	• FÁS funding to Drama (including community drama) £
National Theatre Society	2,433,000	
Dublin	1,592,100	1,933,644
Rest of Leinster	126,250	300,500
Munster	642,200	1,003,000
Connacht	712,450	958,328
Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan	12,800	300,000
TOTAL	■ 5,518,800	4,495,472

• Does not include drama operations of arts centres, 'artsquads' or other multi-media projects

■ Includes £195,000 from Community Arts/Arts and Disability budgets. Does not include grants/awards to

individuals or grants to North/South projects.

Note: These regions do not correspond with the FÁS regional structure.

Table B presents the same figures in regional terms, with the National Theatre Society excluded from the picture. FÁS is seen in this analysis to subsidise drama activities at a higher level than the Arts Council in each of the five regions shown. The difference over the country as a whole is 46%. In Dublin, FÁS funding exceeds Arts Council funding to drama by 21%; in the Rest of Leinster FÁS provides 2.4 times as much funding as the Council; in Munster it provides 1.6 times as much as the Arts Council; in Connacht FÁS funding is 34% higher and in Donegal/Monaghan/Cavan, FAS provides 23 times as much funding to drama as does the Arts Council.

Table B

Funding to Drum Projects Regionally

(excluding National Theatre Society)

Projected Figures for 1995

	■ Arts Council funding to Drama (including community drama) £	■ FÁS funding to Drama (including community drama) £
Dublin	1,592,100	1,933,644
Rest of Leinster	126,250	300,500
Munster	642,200	1,003,000
Connacht	712,450	958,328
Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan	12,800	300,000
TOTAL	• 3,085,800	4,495,472

- Does not include drama operations of arts centres, 'artsquads' or other multi-media projects
- Includes £195,000 from Community Arts/Arts and Disability budgets. Does not include grants/awards to individuals or grants to North/South projects.

Note: These regions do not correspond with the FÁS regional structure.

The Theatre in Ireland Report has established that within the registered professional theatre production sector this percentage relationship is reversed - 30% of total income in the theatre industry in 1994 came from Arts Council subsidy as against just 10% from FÁS.^{viii}

Analysis of the 1995 FÁS allocations to those companies included in the UCD/Coopers and Lybrand survey indicates that the level of FÁS support within this sample rose by 17% from £1.6m. in 1994 to £1.87m. in 1995. Total Arts Council funding to the professional production sector identified by UCD/Coopers and Lybrand stands at £5.13m in 1995. Within the professional production sector nationally, therefore, Arts Council funding is currently 2.7 times that provided via Community Employment, (i.e. FÁS matches Arts Council funding at a rate of 37%).

Table C

Funding to the Professional Theatre Production Sector Nationally

(as identified by the UCD "Theatre in Ireland" study) *

Projected Figures for 1995

	■ Arts Council funding to professional theatre production companies and venues £	■ FÁS funding to professional theatre production companies and venues £
National Theatre Society	2,433,000	-
Dublin*	1,282,550	885,122
Rest of Leinster	111,000	-
Munster	620,000	446,000
Connacht	677,700	539,928
Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan	6,000	-
TOTAL	5,130,250	1,871,050

* Professional production companies formed before 1994

■ Does not include drama operations of arts centres, 'artsquads' or other multi-media projects

* Does not include Dublin Theatre Festival

Note: These regions do not correspond with the FÁS regional structure

Looking at funding levels to professional theatre production through a regional lens, however, the difference is somewhat less pronounced. If the National Theatre Society is excluded, the total Arts Council funding to the professional theatre production sector stands at £2,697,250 for the State as a whole. FÁS with its £1 -87m matches this support across the regions at a rate of 69%.

In each of the five regions identified, the Arts Council provides more funding to professional companies and venues than FÁS. In Dublin, the Council provides 1.45 times as much as FÁS; in Munster 1.5 and in Connacht 1.25. In the Rest of Leinster the Council subsidises professional production to the sum of £111,000, but FÁS does not subsidise any company in this region. Likewise in Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan, no professional production organisation uses Community Employment. In this region, the Arts Council funds one theatre to the sum of £6,000.

Table D

Funding to the Professional Theatre Production Sector Regionally

(as identified by UCD "Theatre in Ireland" study)*

Projected Figures for 1995

	■ Arts Council funding to professional theatre production companies and venues £	■ FÁS funding to professional theatre production companies and venues £
Dublin •	1,282,550	885,122
Rest of Leinster	111,000	-
Munster	620,000	446,000
Connacht	677,700	539,928
Donegal, Cavan, Monaghan	6,000	-
TOTAL	2,697,250	1,871,050

* Professional production companies formed before 1994

■ Does not include drama operations of arts centres, 'artsquads' or other multi-media projects

• Does not include Dublin Theatre Festival

Note: These regions do not correspond with the FÁS regional structure

When the 37% ratio in the professional production sector is compared with the 81.5% overall ratio, the obvious inference is that FÁS has tended to give considerable funding to drama programmes in the community, most of which were unlikely to benefit from Arts Council subsidy, given the limited level of its overall budget which the Council can devote to this area. (Of the £195,000 identified above as being earmarked for drama, but coming out of Community and Disability Arts budgets, only £13,000 goes to organisations which do not comply with the UCD/Coopers and Lybrand definitions of a professional production company or venue.) The amount contributed by FÁS Community Employment on the other hand to drama in the community via organisations which would not fit the description "professional production company" is £2.62m in 1995.

Conclusion

In summary, FÁS has become a significant and benign if disinterested funder of the arts 'explosion' in modern Ireland, matching Arts Council revenue funding to the combined arts sector at a rate of 83%: in drama at a rate of 81% and in the professional theatre sector at a rate of 37% in 1995.

The strengths of this scenario lie in an improved ethos of staff training and human resource management among arts organisations; a significantly greater funding pool for arts activity than might otherwise be the case and a proliferation of arts activities in communities where such activity - demanded though it might have been - could not have occurred.

The negatives include the continued dependence of many established theatre companies and other arts organisations on short-term scheme workers for what most managements would view as core, long-term positions. Above all there is the concern that the nation by default - because of the lack of adequate funding through the Arts Council and Local Authorities to cover core staffing - has devolved almost 50% responsibility for the financing of arts activities to a state agency whose objectives are quite properly focussed on quality job creation and training, rather than cultural development.

The highest single FÁS subsidy to an arts organisation in Ireland this year is approximately £450,000 which is committed to an independent theatre company in Dublin. The company which presents street theatre and runs drama programmes in schools has 80 employees on its combined schemes. It is not a client of the Arts Council. Only two Arts Council drama clients receive more than this level of public funding, namely the National Theatre Society and the Gate Theatre. The average level of grant aid to Dublin independent companies is £40,000, and to regional independent companies £42,500.^{ix}

The positive achievement in cases such as the one just described are the commendable initiative of the practitioners involved in sourcing significant funds for a drama project where the limits on funding to theatre (particularly to new theatre in Dublin) via the Arts Council and the Local Authority would probably otherwise have ruled the programme out. A negative factor is the dislocation of such projects from long established mechanisms of dialogue, guidance and indeed monitoring in the highly specialised arts and culture fields.

Community Employment programmes are monitored and evaluated by FÁS with the highest care and regard for the proper management of public funds, the training and welfare of the participants and the general service to the community. Spokespersons in the arts have contended, however, that unless there is a co-ordinated national approach to the funding and monitoring of arts schemes, and unless the current acknowledgement of the value of partnership and specialist input into vocational training development is built in to accountable structures, the arts and the public may suffer damage in the long term.

It is widely felt within the arts community that the statutory bodies with responsibility for the arts need to have their roles in this equation greatly enhanced, by negotiation, partnership and proportionately increased funding to their own coffers, so that the investment of public money in the nation's cultural life and cultural industries can remain primarily the responsibility of the authorities entrusted by the State in Acts of the Oireachtas to over see this function.

- (i) *Theatre Ireland No. 12, 1987*
- (ii) *FÁS Expenditure on the Arts: Fiona Bums, The Arts Council 1995*
- (iii) *Tom Costelloe, FÁS, speaking at "The Art of Managing the Arts" conference at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 1991, set out FÁS position regarding dialogue with the Arts Council.*
- (iv) *Paddy Woodworth, Arts Editor of the Irish Times, summing up the conference on the Regional Development of the Arts, May 1995.*
- (v) *The forum met from November 1994 to June 1995, convened by the Mainie Jellet Project. Cultural Sector Forum Report, Vocational Arts Education and Training. September 1995.*
- (vi) *Speaker at Plenary Session, Conference on the Regional Development of the Arts, speaker identified himself as director of a project which avails of Community Employment*
- (vii) *Many of those arts organisations which availed of the early schemes acknowledged the unsatisfactory nature and indeed ethical dilemma of utilising such schemes, but insisted that the failure of statutory arts funding to keep pace with the industry's growth left them with no choice in the matter. One theatre manager commented in a journalistic interview: "It's a chicken and egg situation. I wouldn't be here today and (the organisation) wouldn't be here without that (Department of Labour) support. So does the end justify the means? We have arrived. We have developed, and we have staged nine productions in eighteen months. The Arts Council was not supporting us in 1985, they were not supporting us in 1986. The Department of Labour continued to support us." Theatre Ireland No. 12, 1987*
- (viii) *A Study of Theatre in Ireland, UCD/Coopers and Lybrand, contained in this volume. Table 1.8 (Note: this study includes arts centres' theatre activities, whereas the analysis of FÁS and Arts Council figures in this section does not.)*
- (ix) *The Arts Plan 1995-1997, M7 and M1 5*

(b) Local Authorities

Table E shows a breakdown of Local Authorities' contribution to the arts in the Republic of Ireland in 1993. Table F shows the figures for drama and theatre in the same year, showing direct expenditure (e.g. when a local authority owns a hall), artform expenditure (usually direct grant-aid) and capital expenditure. These are the most recent figures available in this format. The breakdown was arrived at in a 1994 research programme carried out for the Arts Council by Claire Watson.

Provision for the arts is a reserve function of local authorities in the Republic of Ireland. Under the 1993 Arts Act, local authorities are enabled but not obliged to provide direct funding to arts activities. Table 1.8 of the UCD 'Theatre in Ireland' report (contained in this volume) indicates that in 1994, local authorities contributed £247,000 to professional theatre companies and venues. This was just under 2% of the total turnover of the sector.

Apart from the direct financial contribution mentioned, local authorities support theatre activities in a number of ways that are difficult to quantify. The development work carried out by the network of local authority Arts Officers often includes theatre and drama based activities, frequently in a community set-up. The Tribal Project, referred to in the Report under 'Children's Theatre and Drama' is funded by Dublin Corporation, not out of the arts budget, but out of the community budget. A network of town halls and other civic, educational and municipal venues are maintained by local authorities for use as theatres, largely by the amateur sector but increasingly by touring professional companies, (an example is Dundalk Town Hall which costs annually £50,000 to maintain and would have a mix of amateur and professional shows). It is notable that Dublin, with a population of over one million inhabitants, has no municipal theatre.

Table E: Local Authority expenditure on the an is in 1993

Local Authority	Revenue Expenditure			Capital Expenditure	Gross Expenditure
	Direct Provision	Artform Projects	Sub-total	Sub-total	Total
Cariow County Council	-	3,000	3,000	1,200	4,200
Cavan County Council	31,842	11,450	43,292	-	43,292
Clare County Council	20,700	16,811	37,511	-	37,511
Cork County Council	-	62,925	62,925	-	62,925
Cork Corporation	63,111	316,050	379,161	-	379,161
Donegal County Council	30,000	36,745	66,745	-	66,745
Dublin County Council	3,100	126,400	129,500	-	129,500
Dublin Corporation	615,000	226,140	841,140	165,000	1,006,140
Galway County Council	15,793	30,250	46,043	-	46,043
Galway Corporation	5,000	72,850	77,850	-	77,850
Kerry County Council	20,562	27,452	48,014	-	48,014
Tralee UDC	-	14,728	14,728	-	14,728
Kildare County Council	21,242	15,758	37,000	-	37,000
Kilkenny County Council	24,827	19,909	44,736	-	44,736
Kilkenny Corporation	17,500	4,000	21,500	-	21,500
Laois County Council	22,054	31,350	53,404	-	53,404
Leitrim County Council	-	1,037	1,037	-	1,037
Limerick County Council	-	7,700	7,700	-	7,700
Limerick Corporation	94,239	21,900	116,139	86,533	202,692
Longford County Council	-	1,950	1,950	-	1,950
Louth County Council	-	-	-	-	-
Dundalk UDC	74,569	8,985	83,554	17,556	101,110
Drogheda Corporation	-	11,500	11,500	110,000	121,500
Mayo County Council	17,500	83,000	100,500	-	100,500
Meath County Council	-	4,000	4,000	-	4,000
Monaghan County Council	24,920	69,125	94,045	-	94,045
Monaghan UDC	-	2,194	2,194	-	2,194
Offaly County Council	-	-	-	-	-
Roscommon County Council	6,000	11,500	17,500	22,663	40,163
Sligo County Council	-	3,950	3,950	-	3,950
Sligo Corporation	-	17,600	17,600	-	17,600
Tipperary NR County Council	-	2,150	2,150	-	2,150
Tipperary SR County Council	1,285	5,000	6,285	-	6,285
Clonmel Corporation	-	3,000	3,000	-	3,000
Waterford County Council	-	2,250	2,250	-	2,250
Waterford Corporation	-	45,500	45,500	-	45,500
Westmeath County Council	31,040	-	31,040	-	31,040
Athlone UDC	-	-	-	-	-
Wexford County Council	-	44,185	44,185	-	44,185
Wexford Corporation	-	15,975	15,975	25,000	40,975
Wicklow County Council	4,900	3,950	8,850	-	8,850
Arklow UDC	-	3,000	3,000	-	3,000
Bray UDC	-	2,000	2,000	-	2,000
Wicklow UDC	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Total	1,145,184	1,38869,	2,533,453	427,972	2,961,425

Table F: Local Authority expenditure on theatre in 1993

Local Authority	Direct provision	Amateur drama	Professional drama	artform expenditure	Capital expenditure	Total Expenditure
Carlow County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cavan County Council	-	-	2,000	-	-	2,000
Clare County Council	-	822	-	-	-	822
Cork County Council	-	2,675	-	-	-	2,675
Cork Corporation	-	23,500	-	209,000	-	232,500
Donegal County Council	-	650	7,538	-	-	8,188
Dublin County Council	-	38,000	-	18,000	-	56,000
Dublin Corporation	-	12,650	14,000	-	-	26,650
Galway County Council	-	2,500	2,750	2,000	-	7,250
Galway Corporation	-	2,500	15,900	1,000	-	19,400
Kerry County Council	-	150	800	2,100	-	3,050
Tralee UDC	-	-	-	2,000	-	2,000
Kildare County Council	-	3,302	-	1,000	-	4,302
Kilkenny County Council	-	100	4,781	35	-	4,916
Kilkenny Corporation	17,500	550	200	-	-	18,250
Laois County Council	-	500	-	1,200	-	1,700
Leitrim County Council	-	250	-	-	-	250
Limerick County Council	-	400	-	-	-	400
Limerick Corporation	15,000	400	450	-	-	15,850
Longford County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-
Louth County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-
DundalkUDC	51,983	-	-	1,250	9,556	62,789
Drogheda Corporation	-	1,400	-	-	55,000	56,400
Mayo County Council	-	-	-	-	-	500
Meath County Council	-	500	-	-	-	-
Monaghan County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-
Monaghan UDC	-	-	-	-	-	-
Offaly County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-
Roscommon County Council	-	250	-	100	-	350
Sligo County Council	-	-	-	1,500	-	1,500
Sligo Corporation	-	500	500	4,000	-	4,500
Tipperary NR County Council	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tipperary SR County Council	-	800	-	400	-	1,200
Clonmel Corporation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waterford County Council	-	250	-	-	-	250
Waterford Corporation	-	4,000	4,000	9,000	-	13,000
Westmeath County Council	31,040	-	-	-	-	31,040
Athlone UDC	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wexford County Council	-	-	-	-	-	1,550
Wexford Corporation	-	-	-	2,200	25,000	27,600
Wicklow County Council	-	-	-	-	-	300
Arklow UDC	-	-	-	-	-	200
Bray UDC	-	300	-	300	-	600
Wicklow UDC	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	115,523	94,899	52,919	255,085	89,556	607,982

(c) Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht

The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht does not have a 'drama policy' as such, insofar as it does not have isolated policies for individual art forms, rather it takes responsibility for arts and culture as a whole. The fact of having such a department and a cabinet Minister with direct responsibility for the arts has clearly, however, had an impact on the theatre in Ireland over the past three years. This has included the general improvements attributable to annual government budget increases to the arts through the Arts Council, for which the Minister is responsible at cabinet (£11.5m. in 1992 to £16.25m. in 1995); the fact of this Theatre Review, which is anticipated in the Arts Plan 1995 -1997, and the investment of direct capital and other grants from the Department into specific drama projects in Ireland. The Department's responsibility for National Cultural Institutions has also had an impact in relation to the National Theatre Society.

Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht Direct grant-aid to Theatre 1992 -1995

	1992	1993	1994
	£	£	£
Abbey Theatre (National Theatre Society)	-	-	300,000
Duchas Folk Theatre, Trim	-	10,000	-
Galway Theatre Project	-	32,000	500,000
Longford Theatre	25,000	-	300,000
Siamsa Tire, Tralee	-	30,000	30,000
Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny	50,000	-	-

The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht have sought to introduce a consistent system to provide for the major national cultural institutions, and have introduced mechanisms whereby the Department and the Arts Council consult on the annual grant decisions affecting the National Theatre Society, the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the National Concert Hall. Grant applications by these institutions are assessed and evaluated by the Arts Council which then places its recommendations before the Minister. Once the Minister has indicated his approval, the National Theatre is then funded directly by the Arts Council, while the two other institutions are funded directly by the Department. The question of having all three dealt with out of the same budget head has been looked at, but there is currently a legislative impediment to this, so the grant-aiding source remains as it has been, but with the principle of consultation and inter-agency advice now enshrined.

(d) Notes on the Role of the Advisory Committee for Cultural Relations, Department of Foreign Affairs

Considerable interest has been expressed elsewhere in this Report in the question of Irish theatre touring overseas and other ways of linking into international theatre networks. At the moment the primary source of assistance for such ventures in Ireland is the Department of Foreign Affairs which has an annual budget of £400,000 (1995) for such purposes. This is administered by the Cultural Relations Committee. This section simply sets out the structure and role of the committee, for information.

1. Functions of the Advisory Committee for Cultural Relations

The main function of the Committee is to advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the artistic and cultural merits of particular cultural projects abroad. The Committee is informed by the Minister of other projects which, in his view, clearly serve the purpose for which the allocation exists and may comment on them. Decisions about whether grants are given and the amounts of grants are at the Minister's discretion.

2. Purpose of Allocation

(i) The purpose of the allocation for Cultural Relations is to enable the Minister for Foreign Affairs to carry out or to give financial support to Irish cultural projects of a high artistic standard with a view to the enhancement of Ireland's image and reputation abroad and the promotion of friendly relations and of mutual knowledge and understanding with other countries. In deciding about activities to be arranged with assistance from the allocation, particular attention is given to their potential to promote Irish exports and tourism and investment from abroad.

(ii) The Minister may provide grants to Irish or foreign institutions, organisations, groups or individuals in connection with cultural projects which, in his opinion, qualify for such grants under paragraph (i). He may also provide grants for the donation or loan to foreign governments, institutions, organisations, groups or individuals of objects of Irish cultural interest.

3. Expenditure from Allocation

Cultural projects may be carried out

(a) directly by the Department of Foreign Affairs and, where necessary, through Irish diplomatic and consular offices abroad;

(b) by the Department in co-operation with Irish State bodies or with Irish or foreign institutions, organisations, groups or individuals; and

(c) by such institutions, organisations, groups or individuals with the support of a grant provided by the Minister.

4. Membership

The Committee consists of up to twenty-one members appointed for two years by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee are designated by the Minister from among its members. Members of the Committee in any two-year term are eligible for reappointment in the next term or in a subsequent term.

5. Notes on procedures

- (i) Meetings are held every 2 months.
- (ii) The proceedings of meetings being confidential, information about matters discussed may not be released to applicants for grants or to others without the approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- (iii) A member who is personally involved with any project being considered by the Committee is expected to make other members aware of the fact and not to be present while the matter is under discussion.

Appendix 3: List of Youth Drama Groups In the Republic of Ireland

Activate Youth Theatre

Cork

Aisteori Oga

Galway

Athy Youth Theatre

Co. Kildare

Back to Front Youth Theatre

Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan

Belcony Belles

Dublin

Blanchardstown Youth Theatre

Dublin

Boomerang Youth Theatre

Cork

Butt Drama Circle

Ballybofey, Co. Donegal

Cabinteely Youth Theatre

Dublin

Carrickmacross Youth Theatre

Co. Monaghan

CAT Knapps Youth Theatre

Cobh, Co. Cork

Clondalkin Youth Theatre

Dublin

Cootehill Youth Theatre

Co. Cavan

Corca Baiscinn Youth Theatre

Kilkee, Co. Clare

Corcaghan Youth Theatre

Stranooden, Co. Monaghan

Cornmill YD

Carrickallen, Co. Leitrim

Droichead Youth Theatre

Co. Louth

Drumlin Youth Theatre

Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan

Dry Rain Youth Theatre

Bray, Co. Wicklow

Dublin Youth Theatre

Dublin

Dun Laoghaire Youth Theatre

Co. Dublin

Dundalk Youth Theatre

Co. Louth

East Clare Youth Theatre

Co. Clare

Finn Valley Youth Theatre

Stranolar, Co. Donegal

Galway Youth Theatre

Galway

Howth Comm Group

Co. Dublin

Kildare YD

Co. Kildare

Kilkenny Youth Theatre

Kilkenny
Killarney Youth Theatre
Co. Kerry
Laois Youth Theatre
Portlaoise, Co. Laois
MANY Youth Theatre Co-op
Newport, Co. Tipperary
Mullingar Youth Theatre
Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Neilstown Youth Theatre
Neilstown, Dublin
Newpark Youth Theatre
Blackrock, Co. Dublin
Northside Youth Theatre
Coolock, Dublin
Pikeman Youth Theatre
Tralee, Co Kerry
Pocket Youth Theatre
Wexford
Red Cow Lane Youth Theatre
Dublin
Rossmore Youth Theatre
Enniskeneane, Co. Cork
Route 36
Ballymun, Dublin
Rush Jnr Drama
Rush, Co. Dublin
Skerries Youth Theatre
Skerries, Co. Dublin
St Kevin's Drama Group
Kilnamanagh, Dublin
St. Columba's Co.
Rathfarnham, Dublin
Stagef right
Glasnevin, Dublin
Tallaght Youth Theatre
Tallaght, Dublin
Triskel Youth Theatre
Cork
Tubbercurry Youth Theatre
Co. Sligo
Virginia YD
Cavan
Walk the Talk
Coolock, Dublin
Waterford YD
Waterford
Wexford Youth Theatre
Wexford

Source; *National Association of Youth Drama*

Appendix 4: Dates of Consultative Meetings

This report has always been intended as the first part in a process designed to enable the Arts Council, in consultation with the theatre community and interested parties, to design a strategic action programme for theatre in the coming years. A sequence of public consultations will follow the publication of this report. Theatre practitioners and interested parties are invited to come along and participate in meetings at which the implications of the report will be openly debated and the views of the theatre community recorded for consideration. The meetings will be taped and the edited transcripts will be published in report form in the Spring of 1996. The published transcripts, together with this current Report, will provide a body of knowledge, opinion and advice which will inform Arts Council strategies on theatre and drama in the future.

The process of consultation begins with a national meeting at Dublin Castle on Sunday, December 3rd 1995. Sunday is chosen in order to allow practitioners with six-day show commitments, especially those working outside Dublin, to travel and participate. The local meetings take place on Saturdays in January and February 1996. The meetings are intended to be inclusive and wide ranging. It is hoped that practitioners from all walks of theatre will attend, not just company managers, but actors, directors, designers, technical personnel, those involved in education and outreach, training, community drama etc..

The purpose of the National Meeting on December 3rd is to launch the consultation phase and to determine agendas for local meetings. After a brief introduction to the background of the Review and the findings of this report, working groups will examine the key issues identified in the report and will draw up proposals for further discussion at local level. It has already been proposed that two of the meetings will focus on aspects of touring. The Longford meeting will examine regional touring in general. The Monaghan meeting will focus particularly on North/South co-operation. Practitioners from all parts of Ireland are welcome to attend any of the meetings.

National Meeting *

3 December 1995, Dublin Castle 12.30- 18-00hrs.

Regional Meetings 1996

13 January	Garter Lane Arts Centre, Waterford	11.30- 16.30hrs
20 January	Firkin Crane Arts Centre, Cork	11.30- 16.30hrs
27 January	Garage Theatre, Monaghan	11.30- 16.30hrs
3 February	Backstage Theatre, Longford	11.30- 16.30hrs
10 February	Municipal Theatre, Galway	11.30-16.30hrs
17 February	Andrews Lane Theatre, Dublin	11.30- 16.30hrs

** Because of anticipated high numbers at the Dublin Castle meeting on December 3rd, a system of registration has been introduced. This is to facilitate the catering and administrative staff on the day, who will need to have a clear indication of numbers. Those intending to come along must either fill out and return a registration form (which will be widely circulated) or else telephone the Arts Council to reserve a place.*

There is no registration fee and attendance at all of the meetings is free of charge.

Enquiries/Reservations to:

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Tel.01-6611840.Fax 01-6761302.