

**REVIEW OF THE NORTH SOUTH TOURING SCHEME**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to North/South Touring Scheme**

Proposals for the North/South Touring scheme were adopted by both Arts Councils in 1996, enabling the scheme to be launched in 1997. The original proposal provided for an 'earmarked' fund resourced by both Councils which aimed 'to facilitate and extend opportunities for theatre companies to tour their work throughout Ireland.' At the time the Drama Officer of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon noted that the members of his Council were hopeful that the proposals might go some way to addressing the needs of professional companies based in Northern Ireland that wished to bring their work to audiences in the South.

One of the chief motivating factors in setting up the North/South Touring Scheme for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland was the desire to extend the platform for showcasing the work of Northern Ireland companies. The Arts Council was also aware of a demand from venues in the north for theatre product which the local companies were not wholly able to satisfy. Initially An Chomhairle Ealaíon set aside IR £35,000 to be applied to the Scheme and enable professional theatre managements based in Northern Ireland to bring their productions to audiences in the south during 1997. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland initially invested a sum of £15,000.

The original proposal for the scheme allowed recipients to receive guarantees or fees from venues across the border, but stressed that the support from the fund should be taken into account in any negotiations on price. The idea of the scheme was to subsidise marginal costs associated with cross-border touring, and not to replace existing funding.

The purpose of the scheme was therefore to encourage theatre companies to present their work across the border giving audiences, north and south access to a greater range of high quality theatre production.

### **1.2 Background to the Current Review**

In 2001/02 the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon reduced its investment in the Scheme as it wished to provide increased revenue to venues and companies. An Chomhairle Ealaíon stated that it was anxious to review the scheme in light of its re-structured funding arrangements including Multi Annual Funding within which Touring would be considered rather than through the assessment of additional applications/scheme. Subsequently this review was commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in September 2001.

## **North/South Touring Scheme**

### **2.1 Format**

The scheme was first launched in 1997. There have been nine application deadlines to date. The scheme is currently on hold until the outcome of this review can be considered by both Councils.

The same criteria have applied throughout the lifespan of the Scheme:

- Open to theatre companies based North or South who are currently in receipt of Revenue funding from either Arts Council
- Will cover marginal costs of touring to venues across the border and will not necessarily apply to all venues
- Will not cover pre-productions costs
- Will not cover proposals from venues or promoters
- Will not substitute for funding available from other sources (Such as box office, grants from other organisations or deals with commercial venues or promoters).
- The proposed tour must include at least two venues in the North and three in the South
- The proposed tour must take place before –
- The applicant must show clearly all details of the proposed tour, both artistic and financial
- The applicant must show clearly that the proposed tour is not being currently addressed by other existing funds operated by either Arts council
- Applicants will be expected to show clearly that they have negotiated box office and commercial deals, where appropriate.

### **2.2 Application requirements**

There is a standardised application form for the Scheme, requiring information on:

#### **Production and Tour Dates**

#### **Revenue Grant/Other sources of funding allocated to the Production (excluding box office)**

- Total Revenue from Arts Council
- Amount of Council funding towards the project
- Other funding'/sponsorship towards the project – confirmed and unconfirmed
- Details of pre-production budget, including administration overheads

## The Tour

- Tour dates and schedule including confirmed and unconfirmed venues. Written back-up from venue or promoter
- Outline contractual and financial arrangements with all venues listed
- Budget breakdown of total touring costs including transport, travel, subsistence etc.
- Indication of shortfall between total tour income and expenditure for venues across the border
- Breakdown of shortfall, per venue
- Total grant sought

In 1998/99 application forms had to be returned to Phelim Donlon. In 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 forms from northern-based applicants were returned to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and southern-based applicants returned to the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

### **2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

There is no standard report form used by the Arts Councils for the North South Touring Scheme. Applicants are required in a letter of contract to submit statistical information. In one year it appears that the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's standard post project report form had been circulated to recipients. After the first year of operation a percentage of the grant was withheld until the necessary post event report had been submitted by the recipient. Nonetheless, there are a number of report forms outstanding, and the lack of a standardised report form has meant that the information supplied by grant recipients is extremely variable and often lacking in statistical detail.

Those report forms that are held on file at the Arts Council of Northern Ireland have been used for analysis. Backdated information has proved difficult to access from the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon as the relevant material has been archived and was not accessible by Officers within the timescale of the Review.

## 2.4 Timescales

To date there have been two deadlines for applications within each twelve month period. Applicants are expected to tour within the same financial year that decisions on awards are made.

<b>Deadline</b>
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 1997
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> August 1997
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 1998
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> August 1998
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 1999
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> August 1999
Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2000
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2000
Friday 19 January 2001

## 2.5 Decision-making process

Applications are considered by the relevant art-form Officers in both Arts Councils and their recommendations are reported to the respective Councils for consideration.

## 2.6 Funding

The Scheme is funded by both Councils. Investment to date is charted below:

Year	Arts Council of Northern Ireland	An Chomhairle Ealaion
1997/1998	15,000 Stg	35,000 Stg
1998/1999	15,000 Stg	35,000 Stg
1999/2000	20,000 Stg	40,000IR
2000/2001	20,000 Stg	75,000IR
2001/2002	25,000 Stg	35,000 IR

Investment by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaion was reduced in 2001/02 on the grounds that it wished to provide increased revenue to venues and companies.

### **3. Strategic Context - Northern Ireland**

#### **3.1 Touring Theatre**

In 1996 serious dialogue was beginning to take place between the Theatre Producers Group and the Arts Managers Group with regard to issues and difficulties around touring, discussions which would eventually result in organisation of the first Theatre Exchange day in Belfast in June 1998. Key issues recorded in correspondence in 1996 from the venue managers in the north were with regard to lack of advance planning and information on touring product, a perceived anomaly between touring product and audience demand, lack of communication between producers and promoters, a selective approach to tour venues by producers, and inadequate marketing information from companies. In response the theatre producers in the north highlighted planning difficulties due to short-term funding, and claimed there was a lack of available technical information on venues.

#### **3.2 Theatre Exchange**

Theatre Exchange was established as a result of constructive dialogue between producers and regional promoters/venue managers. There have been three Theatre Exchange days held since 1998. Southern companies and venues were invited to attend the first Theatre Exchange on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1998 at the Lyric Theatre in Belfast, with the aim of improving planning and communication amongst all those involved in touring throughout the island. For the most recent event, on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001 in the Marketplace Theatre Armagh, the organising committee of representatives from the Theatre Producers Group and Arts Managers Group chose to take a selective approach with regard to delegates and restricted access to northern theatre venues and promoters and northern producing companies.

Some of the key action points recorded at the 2001 Theatre Exchange were:

### **AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING**

Agreed Guidelines for Tour Operation:

- The exact points at which venues and companies are involved in audience development work will be clarified on submission of the promotional material and literature pack.
- Incentives will be planned at point of contract that increase the existing audience base.
- Companies and venues will discuss print material designs so that distributed material is suitable for regional distribution.
- Further discussion will take place on the possibility of a consortium of venues and companies (lead by the Association of Regional Theatres) applying to the Lottery for finance to commission an audience survey from which base line information can be obtained

which will inform audience development policy across Northern Ireland.

## **PROGRAMMING**

- Venues and companies agreed to a long-term strategic exchange of ideas with each other individually. This will be monitored and reviewed at the next Theatre Exchange in 12 months time. Strategy documents will be posted on the TPG website.
- The Association of Regional Theatres (ART) will collate and distribute the artistic policy each venue to the Theatre Producer's Group at their next meeting.
- The Theatre Producers Group will collate and distribute the intentions of individual companies at their next meeting. Both will be posted on the Theatre Producers Group Website.
- The promotion of an annual new companies festival which tours throughout venues in Northern Ireland will be considered by ART.

## **SCHEDULING**

- Venues and companies agreed to reschedule programming timetables to improve spread of local theatre performances throughout the year across Northern Ireland.
- Companies, through the TPG, in association with the Arts Council, agreed to develop advance planning for productions to fit into venue plans.
- Venues agreed to structure programming so all venues are programmed at the same time. The issue of venues having corresponding marketing deadlines (e.g. season brochures, advance publicity etc.) will be discussed at the next meeting of ART.
- The Theatre Producers Group will arrange to meet Lottery to review restrictions on Lottery funding for the creation of new works.
- Imelda Foley will pass to the Arts Council the need for freeing up of government "creativity funds" to include production of theatre as well as increased participation in theatre.

## **Outcome**

One of the key outcomes was a commitment to setting up three programming meetings each year with venues so that companies could submit touring proposals and have them considered by all venues at the same time. It was agreed to pilot this scheme to see how successful it was in improving scheduling.

### **3.3 Touring Theatre Review**

This position paper was prepared by the Performing Arts Department of the Arts Council and independent consultant Jan Branch, and published in November 1998. The report grew out of unease amongst regional venues and touring companies about the position of touring theatre in Northern Ireland, and aimed to focus attention on this aspect and gather opinion for concerned parties. It incorporated a statistical analysis based on questionnaire results, and a series of consultative outcomes and recommendations.

The Consultative outcomes included:

- Supply and Demand – perceptions by venues that they are not offered the product or the choice of product which in their view is suitable for their audiences, countered by complaints from producers that programmers do not seem to prioritise the development of audiences through new or non-populist productions
- Audience Development – importance of maximising box office in a climate of standstill funding, aided by well thought out audience development programmes including incentive schemes, subscriptions series and company residencies.
- Marketing – exploration of the potential of a central, collaborative marketing initiative/agency, with a recognition that the needs of urban and rural audiences are different
- Forward Planning – improved liaison between producers and venue programmers with regard to planning, to include an annual Theatre Exchange day, and continued lobbying for multi-annual funding to allow companies the security to plan further ahead
- Information Sharing – improved communication with regard to information on programming and programming options from companies

General issues raised in the report included reference to the North/South Touring Scheme which 'had eased particular problems regarding subsistence variances etc.'. It was noted, however, that venues could still not afford major companies eg. Druid and the Abbey, and that similarly international companies were generally too expensive. The Arts Council's venue survey was seen as a useful resource but one which necessarily had to be constantly updated. Technical maintenance and general technical preparation for company get-in was criticised, particularly in non-Local Authority venues. A debate on 'one-night' stands and their financial and developmental impracticability was unresolved.

### **3.4 Arts Council of Northern Ireland**

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned a review of its five year plan (1995-2000) which resulted in Prof Anthony Everitt and Annabel Jackson's report 'Opening up the Arts' published in May 2000. Thereafter Council officers worked with a number of consultants to develop a new arts strategy for the organisation. It launched a 5-year plan in June 2001 following an extensive consultation period. The four key priorities outlined within the plan are to:

- Increase opportunities for creative participation in the arts
- Develop new audiences for the arts
- Extend opportunities for artists to develop their work and practice
- Strengthen the capacity of arts organisations to deliver quality experiences of the arts

The document promises a further stage of the planning process at which the ACNI will set out targets and performance measures in greater detail over a three-year period (Corporate Plan). It is also proposed that an Operational Plan will be produced annually, proposing levels of service to be achieved.

## **4. Strategic Context - Republic of Ireland**

### **4.1 Theatre Shop**

Theatre Shop was set up by Siobhán Bourke in 1994 in response to the lack of information available to and about the Irish theatre and dance sectors. It has developed into a valuable resource for Irish theatre practitioners and international colleagues with an interest in the Irish theatre scene.

A conference has been held each year since 1994 to coincide with the Dublin Theatre Festival and Dublin Fringe Festival at which international presenters and producers meet with Irish companies and venue managers. Many contacts have been made and a number of Irish companies have toured internationally as a direct result of the Theatre Shop conference. International delegates are invited by Theatre Shop and usually specific territories are identified each year for discussion and potential exploration.

Theatre Shop is committed to serving the professional theatre and dance community on both sides of the Border. The annual conference is the primary opportunity colleagues from North and South have to network and forge relationships which help to develop strong cross Border touring activity.

The day-long conference comprises:

- Seminars on issues relevant to the growing internationalisation of the arts
- Pre-arranged One-to-One meetings between international presenters and Irish companies
- Practical information sessions on the logistics of international touring
- Networking meetings among companies from either side of the Border

### **4.2 Irish Theatre Handbook**

A major initiative of the Theatre Shop is the Irish Theatre Handbook - the only comprehensive information guide to the drama and dance scene in Ireland, both North and South. Widely regarded as the 'bible' of the professional Irish theatre industry, the Handbook is an invaluable resource for arts managers, playwrights, actors, international presenters or anyone with a professional or general interest in Irish theatre. It contains over one thousand entries including information on Irish Theatre Companies, Theatre Venues and Arts Festivals.

### 4.3 Auditoria

A key piece of research which will soon be available and which will influence strategy for touring programmes in the future is the Auditoria Report. Auditoria is a major review of the performing Arts in Ireland undertaken by An Chomhairle Ealaíon in association with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. It aims to fulfil a number of objectives:

- Prepare a comprehensive data base for the physical infrastructure in Ireland
- Provide both Arts Councils with a means of relating their infrastructural support programmes to their expenditure on performing arts productions
- Provide advice to the Arts Council about the appropriate levels and structures for assistance to the newly developed Cultural Development Incentive Scheme venues
- Provide a means for the Arts Councils to offer advice to their parent Departments about capital investment for the arts.

The report is currently in draft but the finalised report should be available by the end of the year 2001.

Many of the key issues identified during workshops for Auditoria mirror those of colleagues in the north, and are therefore considered relevant in the context of this current review. Some of the issues and comments recorded during consultation workshops included:

***Suitability of Venues:*** A large number of venues, including recently built ones are unsuitable for many artforms and the advice of production companies is often overlooked with regard to design and fit-out.

***High Profile Actors:*** There are difficulties persuading high profile actors to tour, especially during the summer months. There are also difficulties in persuading actors with young families to tour. Long tours are generally considered inconvenient and disruptive.

***Times of the Year:*** Venues offer limited opportunities to touring companies - they don't want shows in the summer, in general; winter is deemed very bad and Easter, particularly in rural Ireland isn't great. The limited amount of touring time left, often results in strong competition with other good productions and it is difficult to drum up an audience if it is in the week immediately following a good production or the week in advance of a very high profile company.

***Communication:*** Communication between the venues and the production companies needs to improve with regard to advance planning, marketing and promotion. There should be greater dialogue and partnerships around commissioning and producing work.

***Artistic Dimension:*** The real challenge and focus for production companies is to foster real artistic talent, not resolve logistical issues. Regional companies have responsibility to bring theatre of the world to

regional areas and to match the offerings that people living in cities can access. Venue managers would like to see a show before booking it and initial runs in somewhere like Dublin offer an opportunity for venue managers to assess its suitability for their own venues. Production companies want to tour the same standard of production irrespective of location.

**Venues Programming Issues:** Many of the touring companies are now in receipt of multi-annual funding but this has not improved the situation for the venues with regard to amount of touring productions available and level of advance notice the companies are prepared to give. The Arts Council should impose conditions on those Production Companies in receipt of multi-annual funding, requiring them to commit to a certain level of touring in the regions. The issue of the guarantee should also be reviewed as part of the move to multi-annual funding. There are virtually no touring productions available for the summer months.

**Balance:** There is a need to achieve balance with regard to a number of issues, including programming between commercial or classical productions which do fill houses and popularise venues and high quality innovative productions;

**Differences in venues:** There are quite strong differences between the venues, which influence their programming policies including key differences around location - Dublin Vs M50 Vs other urban and more isolated regional venues; size of venue; artistic focus. City venues can have a more distinctive or differentiated positioning, whereas regional locations, especially those in peripheral areas, must be able to offer a broad range of productions to meet the needs of the local population.

**Status and Production Company Preferences:** There is a perceived hierarchy of preferences among production companies which sees International touring as first choice, followed by Dublin performances, then urban locations, and finally more peripheral locations.

**Own Productions:** A number of traditionally receiving venues have been getting involved in developing their own productions. It is felt that this change of profile needs to be addressed by the Arts Council, not least because it may require a new definition of what constitutes a production company.

**International Productions:** Bringing in international touring companies, particularly UK ones was often cheaper and invariably easier to plan and manage.

#### **4.4 A View of Theatre in Ireland**

The purpose of this major report was to prepare the groundwork for the Arts Council's Theatre Review by providing a research-based detailed overview of the theatre sector in the Republic of Ireland. It was conducted by a team of four at the Business Research Programme of University College Dublin in association with Coopers and Lybrand Corporate Finance.

With regard to the section on Touring, the Executive Summary notes:

'In the period 1990-1994, 234 productions were toured. By far the biggest proportion of these toured nationally, (81%). Northern Ireland and Britain were the most favoured of non Republic of Ireland destinations (20% and 18% respectively), while a relatively small proportion visited the US (9%) or a European country other than Britain (6%).

Of the 234 productions that toured, 31 (14%) received funding specifically for this purpose. The majority (84%) did not (though they could have been in receipt of revenue or other grants). Of the 80 productions staged by the National Theatre Society in the past five years, 24 (30%) had toured.

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

With regard to audiences for theatre, the Report notes that Ireland 'has a relatively large play-going public, with 37% 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 Report details results of analysis which shows 'that those who are frequent or regular play attenders 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.'

With regard to theatre practitioners' perspectives on the audience the Report notes that although the need for marketing was widely recognised amongst the companies and venues in the survey, 'the vast majority of organisations (82%) had no marketing plan. More than a third of all organisations (36%) never carried out market research, 8% seldom did so and 33% did so irregularly. Only 22% said they carried out market research regularly.'

Touring policy was the subject of criticism on the basis that criteria for funding are not clear. An area of concern among key informants was the lack of control venues have on what touring productions they take. A commonly expressed view was that there are organisational problems with regard to touring, due to the absence of networks.

#### **4.5 An Chomhairle Ealaíon**

An Chomhairle Ealaíon is coming to the end of its second Arts Plan 1999 – 2001. It has been conducting an evaluation of its Arts Plan 1999-2001 as the first step towards the creation of its next Arts Plan. As part of this process submissions were sought from members of the public.

The task was to assess the extent to which the priorities in the Arts Plan were realised, to conduct a needs assessment of the arts in Ireland and to propose a planning methodology, which will inform the production of a new Arts Plan which will operate from 2002 – 2006. Professor Anthony Everitt will draft the plan. While the final document is not finalised some of the general themes and priorities to be identified are emerging as follows:

- Promote audience development
- Encourage participation in the arts
- Prioritise youth arts
- Promote arts in education
- Foster traditional arts
- Extend and refine multi-annual funding
- Address the relationship between venues and producing companies in the performing arts
- Improve the economic standing of artists

It was reported by the Arts Council during consultation for the review that there will be a commitment in the forthcoming Arts Plan to carrying out an examination of the venue/producing company anomalies.

#### **4.6 Cross-border Arts Council Co-operation**

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November the Chairman and Council of An Chomhairle Ealaíon joined the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in an historic joint celebration to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of island-wide co-operation. A reception was held at City Hall in Belfast, attended by representatives of more than 100 organisations which have benefited from joint north-south funding over the last fifty years. Both Arts Councils also held a joint working session to discuss several key areas which have far-reaching implications for the arts island-wide for the next five years. Among those discussed were the present condition and future provision of auditoria in Ireland, the future of opera, initiatives in dance, joint research, north-south touring and joint funding, international promotions and openness and transparency in arts funding.

Previous Arts Council Joint Initiatives have included the Artflight scheme, a North South Dance Officer, and a North South Co-operation Officer. Current initiatives include support of the Tyrone Guthrie Centre at Annaghmakerrig, an Irish Language Drama Review, North South Music Touring (Chamber), and the Banff Residency. Sixty-three arts organisations are jointly funded by both Arts Councils. The Arts Councils

will co-ordinate aspects of strategy but they do not necessarily have the same policy on matters.

#### **4.7 Relevant Strategic Developments – UK**

On 24th September 2001 the Arts Councils of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales announced a flexible new approach to funding performing arts tours across the UK. Previously, most funded performing arts organisations were restricted in the extent to which they could tour the UK, with the four Arts Councils funding work only within their own borders. The new agreement relaxes the rules for organisations touring to small and mid scale venues with the intention of enabling artists to tour to a greater range of venues and audiences to experience a wider range of work. The Arts Councils of England and Scotland allocated £600,000 and £120,000 respectively towards a joint fund for large scale touring between England and Scotland, to include drama, opera and dance. In addition the four UK Arts Councils agreed that tours to small or mid scale venues by funded organisations could use up to 15% of their touring budget for work in other UK countries. Although committed to the principles of cross border touring, the Arts Councils of Wales and Northern Ireland were unable at that time to allocate any additional funding for tours to large scale venues for 2001/02. Such support would not be a priority in Northern Ireland where there are not currently drama, opera or dance companies producing for large-scale venues.

## **5. Funding Opportunities for Theatre Touring**

### **5.1 Northern Ireland**

There are currently nine professional independent theatre companies in the north in receipt of annual revenue grants from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. A range of other companies exist which produce work on a sporadic basis with limited or no project funding and no full-time administrative base.

The revenue clients of the Arts Council make submissions in November for resources for the following financial year (commencing April). The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has not yet been able to introduce multi-annual funding, due to Treasury regulations. Funding allocations are made on the basis of an organisation's proposed programme and its relevance to the key strategic objectives of the Arts Council. Revenue resources can only be spent on activities in Northern Ireland. There are no specific resources earmarked for touring, although many of the companies will propose northern tours in their applications to increase employment weeks and to develop new audiences.

The Lottery Department of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland operates a range of different project funding schemes which offer support to arts activities in Northern Ireland. Theatre companies in the north have benefited primarily from the New Works initiative which offers funding for specific elements of the production of a newly commissioned play or a piece of theatre that is new to Northern Ireland. The new Audience Development initiative has opened out possibilities for northern theatre companies with regard to developing new audiences by extending touring in the north.

Belfast City Council piloted a Work Abroad Scheme for one year in 2000/2001. A range of arts organisations benefited including Replay Productions which received financial assistance to tour a production to Dublin. Despite strong take-up from the sector in its pilot year this scheme has not been continued.

The North/South Touring Scheme appears to be the only mechanism which allows theatre companies in the north to access resources to take work across the border.

### **5.2 Republic of Ireland**

Grants are made by An Chomhairle Ealaíon to organisations to cover their operating costs (either on an annual or a multi-annual basis), or to support individual projects and schemes. There are a number of criteria for funding, and applications are considered against these. A huge range of organisations are supported including both production companies and venues.

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon now approaches funding in cross-disciplinary terms, rather than according to art form divisions. The stated aim is that this allows them to focus more clearly on organisations' own activities and programmes, and the extent to which these meet the Council's strategic priorities. In addition there are a number of schemes to which organisations are eligible to apply such as the projects and commissions.

There are no schemes, which specifically support "touring". Companies in receipt of multi annual funding have not increased their levels of touring and there is no specific condition of the multi-annual funding that companies undertake touring. Touring in the south is now 'de-regulated' and it is stated by the Drama Officer that companies in the south are free to use revenue resources to tour to the north. It is for this reason that representatives of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon feel that the North/South Touring Scheme is now redundant from the point of view of southern-based companies. This would not be a view shared by the sector.

## **6. North South Touring Scheme – Assessment of Impact**

As the monitoring information on file is incomplete or inaccessible, it is impossible within the timescale of this review to provide comprehensive figures with regard to outputs from the Scheme such as total performances, audience figures etc. There is enough monitoring information, however, to provide some useful statistical analysis:

### **6.1 Touring to the South**

Northern companies have availed regularly of the Scheme since its inception. All of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's nine revenue funded independent companies have benefited from the Scheme – Aisling Ghear, Belfast Theatre Company, Big Telly, Centre Stage, Kabosh, Prime Cut, Replay, Ridiculusmus, Tinderbox. The Lyric Theatre has also received a grant.

- The total number of northern companies that have applied to the Scheme is 12.
- The total number of applications from northern companies to the Scheme is 42. Of these applications 35 were successful, 5 were unsuccessful, and 2 applications were withdrawn.
- There has been an average of 7 Northern companies touring across the border each year with the support of the Scheme.
- The average length of cross-border tour by a northern company is 13 performances.
- The average grant to a northern company within the Scheme is £5,311.
- The average attendance per performance based on actual data is 98.

In summary, the Scheme has facilitated the touring of 32 productions across the border from the north within a five year period at a total cost of £185,899.

## **6.2 Touring to the North**

- The total number of southern companies that have applied to the Scheme is 17.
- The total number of applications from southern companies to the Scheme is 22. Of these applications 16 were successful, and 6 were unsuccessful.
- There has been an average of 3 southern companies touring across the border each year with the support of the Scheme
- The average length of cross-border tour by a southern company within the context of the Scheme is 4 performances.
- The average grant to a southern company within the Scheme is £4,380.

In summary, the Scheme has facilitated the touring of 16 productions across the border to the north within a five year period at a cost of £70,080. The spreadsheets appended to this report show more details of the range of touring to venues both north and south of the border.

## **7. Issues and Observations**

### **7.1 General Attitudes to Touring Amongst Companies**

Few theatre companies appear to have a specific brief or stated commitment to touring in general, let alone with regard to cross border touring, and even less have this enshrined as part of their artistic policy. So why do theatre companies tour? Many of the companies interviewed, particularly smaller scale and partially subsidised companies, do so out of financial necessity, as longer runs help to spread the rehearsal and pre-production costs and make a show more financially viable. Many of these smaller and generally newer companies are also interested in extending the platform for their work, building a profile, and generating new audiences.

Of those companies that tour regionally in Ireland, few seem to have geographic priorities and appear to cast the net widely and fill slots on a first come, first served basis.

The consultation during Auditoria suggests that there is an increasing tendency amongst more established companies to pursue urban centres only, and international touring venues.

Within the sector there is a view that few companies are serious about touring. Many working in theatre, both actors and technicians, do not appear to enjoy regional touring - there is a perceived lack of glamour, and on a practical level there are more hardships and inconveniences to endure in relation to one-night stands and hopping around the country when compared to longer runs in urban centres. Theatre practitioners are not well compensated financially at the best of times.

### **Organising a Tour – A Strategic Approach?**

In arranging a tour the process followed by most companies would be:

- Identify the project and dates and write up an outline detailing as much information about the show as possible.
- Identify cost per performance/multiple performance/week long residency
- Circulate written touring proposal
- Await response from venues
- After a week – 2 weeks follow up telephone call to venues.

Most touring companies operate with minimal core staffing. Company managers and administrators who are in the planning stages of a tour and who may be juggling many different responsibilities tend to suffer from the pressures of time and multi-tasking. They do not have a great deal of time to pursue non-communicative venues. Whilst some identify and focus on preferred tour venues, the follow-up phone calls will tend to be prioritised to:

- venues the company has played before
- venues where the company feels it has developed a good working relationship
- venues of strategic importance to the project usually based in urban centres such as Belfast and Dublin, where it is possible to be showcased as part of a festival or to get national reviews

When these avenues have been exhausted, and if slots are still available in the tour schedule, companies will visit venues which:

- have the ability to pay the fee requested
- want the company's project
- make geographical sense in the tour schedule

The multiplicity of issues currently surrounding touring in Ireland which are shared by companies and venues both north and south of the border have been articulated in a variety of contexts. It suggests that there is an urgent need for a clear shared strategy and action plan with regard to improving the situation for companies, venues and audiences.

Multi annual funding for certain companies in the south does not appear to have improved the availability of touring work to regional venues because there has been no specific touring brief attached to the award of these grants. The plea for years that multi annual funding would improve planning does not seem to be the case in the Republic of Ireland. It is something that many of the Northern Ireland companies still aspire to and see as a answer to all their short term planning issues. Unpopular as this opinion may be the fact that artists are driven by a creative imperative may mean that their focus can not go much beyond one project at a time. If companies have a wish list of future projects, then the other resources that they need including commitment from venues and key personnel are not in sync and this needs to be further explored to see how this situation can be improved. Planning for main scale opera production seems to happen for several years in advance. What are the differences and what if anything can we learn here?

### **7.3 Venues**

When arranging tours most companies do a general mail shot of venues with a tour proposal, and most now use the Irish Theatre Handbook as a guide. The Irish Theatre Handbook contains the details of all the new venues both North and South. Information is therefore easily accessible on new and existing venues including those in Northern Ireland.

Since the launch of the Scheme in 1997 many new purpose-built and refurbished venues have opened both north and south of the border, including the Island Arts Centre, Lisburn, The Marketplace, Armagh, The Burnavon Centre, Cookstown, The Millennium Forum, Londonderry, An Grianan Theatre, Letterkenny. This would add weight to the argument that more product is required for the regions and more incentives are needed to encourage companies to tour.

#### **7.4 Southern Companies Views on Touring to Northern Ireland**

Most companies interviewed identified a major problem in communicating with managers in Northern Ireland venues and noted a perceived lack of interest from venues in the north. Many found it difficult to get to speak directly with the individual responsible for programming. When contact was finally made, the company found that it was difficult to get a decision as the manager often had to have any programming selection ratified by a Committee or Council. This protracted time-scale often means that many Northern Ireland venues need to start programming negotiations far in advance of the planning schedules of producing companies and venues in the Republic of Ireland. By the time that Red Kettle was planning its recent tour of 'The Queen and the Peacock' it found that it was too late in the day to secure dates in northern theatre venues.

Those companies that had toured to Northern Ireland with the assistance of the Scheme reported generally favourable experiences and would consider returning. The regularity with which companies tour varies both north and south. Fishamble which toured to Armagh and Enniskillen earlier this year is not planning another tour until early in 2003.

Given the concentration of companies in the Republic of Ireland which are based in Dublin there may be a sense of remoteness from the venues in Northern Ireland. The other main centres for producing companies in the south are Galway, Cork and Waterford where this sense of remoteness will be more pronounced. There is a huge range of venues in the south, and southern companies can more easily fill a tour without having to cross the border, unlike their northern counterparts. Geographical distance is a consideration as travelling in Ireland is time-consuming, so distance can make Northern Ireland appear a less attractive destination.

Speculative views were also put forward from representatives of southern companies that there is an endemic fear and ignorance among people living further south about Northern Ireland and therefore a reluctance to chart unknown territories. There is also, understandably, a lack of familiarity with many of the smaller towns in the north.

There are add on costs when touring to the north such as travel and accommodation at sterling prices. However, in contrast the current exchange rate means that good deals can be got in terms of fee payments. There is also a perceived bureaucracy around tax issues, with differing views about the complexities or otherwise of dealing with this. It was reported that most Northern Ireland venues will only book one-night stands and this is not popular with southern-based companies as it makes that element of the tour more expensive and time-consuming.

Several companies remarked on the first Theatre Exchange event in 1998 which had proved very useful to them in terms of making new contacts in the north. There is a perceived lack of self-promotion by

Northern Ireland venues and such events help to address this and raise awareness.

### **7.5 Northern Companies Views on Touring to the South**

The northern companies are unanimous in their appreciation of the North/South touring scheme and on touring to the south generally. Most reported that they find dealing with southern venues much easier and generally a more pleasant experience. It was generally felt that the programmers can make faster decisions on bookings than their counterparts in the north, and have a good knowledge of theatre and a genuine interest in the product on offer.

### **7.6 Financial Issues**

Theatre companies tend to use revenue and/or project grants to cover pre-production and rehearsal costs. Thereafter they will require sponsorship and income from the venues to help cover the cost of performances. This will take the form of a performance guarantee, box office receipts, or a combination of the two. Often there is still a shortfall between weekly running costs and venue income and sources of subsidy, such as the North/South scheme are vital in order to balance the books and ensure that touring is viable.

Touring companies prefer a straight guarantee fee from venues because most operate within very tight financial confines and cannot therefore afford to take a financial risk. There is no evidence of disparity between fees charged by companies in the north and companies in the south. The rate struck will be dependent on a number of factors. The cost of touring a show varies considerably, depending on the scale of the production for example, cast size, and whether or not the company operates standard union terms and conditions. The fee will vary accordingly. One-night stands tend to be more expensive than half-week or week-long runs. Touring further away from home base entails additional accommodation costs. There is a daily subsistence allowance that must be paid by professional companies when working away from home base. Companies in receipt of low levels of revenue do not appear to be in a position to fully comply with union terms and conditions.

There is no evidence of disparity between the deals struck by venues in the south and those in the north. There were small variations in the guarantees paid to northern companies for the same production by venues in the south depending on negotiations. The more established northern companies will only tour if a guarantee is available. Aisling Gear is the exception in that it tends to tour to non-theatre venues with no programming budget and must therefore depend on box office.

The performances by southern companies in the north within the Scheme are extremely limited in number so no real patterns can be observed with regard to financial matters. Local-authority run theatre venues in the north tend to have programming budgets and are known locally to pay the going price if they choose to book a touring production.

## **Union Rates**

British Equity and Irish Equity operate a reciprocal agreement for touring. This means that Northern Irish companies must pay the higher Irish Equity subsistence allowance when touring in ROI. The current rates are as follows:

### British Equity/ITC Approved Managers

Minimum Salary	£275.00 per week
Meal Allowance Overnight	£10.50

### Irish Equity

Minimum Salary	£201.76IR per week
Subsistence rates for touring in the Republic of Ireland:	
£36 per day for companies receiving no subsidy	
£40.32 per day for companies partially subsidised	
£49.20 per day for companies fully subsidised	

The increased level of subsistence rates for Northern Ireland companies could explain why the fees they quote which are already high due to the fact that they are quoted in Sterling seem higher still than companies from the Republic of Ireland.

## **Currency Differences**

Northern Ireland companies are more expensive because they quote prices in sterling. Also some of the more established companies based in Northern Ireland are cautious about negotiating their prices or accepting a punt equivalent for the sterling value. This makes the subsidy from the North/South Touring scheme very important for these companies, as without it they would be too expensive for venues in the ROI. Companies from the Republic of Ireland seem cheaper than their Northern Irish colleagues because they are quoting their prices in Punts or asking for a sterling equivalent of the fee. This situation will still exist in the future when the Republic of Ireland changes over to Euro.

The currency difference poses another disadvantage for companies from the Republic of Ireland touring in Northern Ireland in that they pay more in accommodation costs and subsistence payments, which have to be paid in sterling. Most companies will try to factor this in to their negotiations with venues but not all have found it possible.

Also many companies have stated that Northern Ireland's venues prefer one night stands. This makes touring more expensive because it incurs over time for technical crews, extra driving time and additional petrol costs. It can also mean that accommodation is more expensive because it more difficult to negotiate a competitive rate with hotels if you are staying just one night.

## **Foreign Entertainers exemption**

The negotiation of the Foreign Entertainers exemption is time consuming for hard pressed company managers and therefore poses a distinct disadvantage to touring in Northern Ireland. Unless an exemption is guaranteed venues in Northern Ireland are required to deduct tax from the fees of companies visiting from the Republic of Ireland.

## **Planning Cycles**

Issues around planning are exacerbated by the fact that companies and venues in the Republic of Ireland have a financial year, which runs through the calendar year whereas most Northern Irish venues and companies run a fiscal year from April – March. In addition the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's financial year is April – March while that of An Chomhairle Ealaíon is Jan – December. (Now all systems in the Republic of Ireland including the revenue Service are coming into line with the calendar year. This year businesses in ROI will not just have the Euro Changeover to take on board. The year end audit and PAYE/PRSI returns will have to be done at the end of December).

The difference in the financial year North and South of the Border has led to the two areas getting out of sync in planning cycles. Northern Ireland venues tend to programme much further in advance. However this is not a general rule because it is not something specific to Northern Ireland venues. Longer established venues in the Republic of Ireland also seem to plan further in advance.

This is as much to do with their popularity as a result of their ability to pay and their geographic location. The combination of these factors makes these venues more appealing to promoters and companies, which prioritise them as part of their touring schedule. This result means certain venues can fill their calendars more quickly than venues which are smaller, have tighter budgets and are not located in large urban centres

## **7.7 Awareness of the North/South Scheme**

Levels of uptake on the Scheme by northern companies indicate a very high awareness in the north. The profile of the scheme in Northern Ireland appears to be helped by the fact that there is good networking amongst the small group of theatre companies, most of whom are based in Belfast. The Theatre Producers Group is an important forum for information exchange and it is regularly attended by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Drama Officer. The Theatre Forum in the south is not felt to be wholly representative of a sector which has the additional challenges with regard to regular networking of geography and scale.

Consultation revealed a low awareness amongst companies in the south of the Scheme and how it works. In particular there was confusion about the deadlines and about how projects are assessed.

The Scheme does not appear to have a wide profile and there appears to be little promotion carried out by either of the Arts Councils. Only revenue-funded clients are eligible for the Scheme and so they are mailed directly with information. Neither Arts Council has details of the Scheme posted on web pages. An Chomhairle Ealaíon does not list the scheme in its publication 'Awards and Opportunities' which outlines all other major awards and schemes available to companies and individuals, nor in its Annual Reports.

Some of those consulted felt that information about the closing date for applications was not freely available and that this lack of information has been confusing and frustrating even for companies, which are aware of the scheme.

## **7.8 Geography of Ireland**

The Republic of Ireland is three times as big as Northern Ireland and holds far more major cities. Companies based in the Republic of Ireland can provide several weeks of touring for each of their productions without entering Northern Ireland. It is difficult for companies based in Northern Ireland to sustain a tour of more than two weeks in the north, and it is all the more important therefore that they have access to venues across the border if productions are to be more financially viable and play to larger audiences.

## **7.9 Value of Scheme**

### **7.9.1 Northern Ireland Companies' Viewpoint**

All the revenue funded companies in the north are unanimous in their praise of the scheme. All have benefited more than once. In consultation all said that their ability to tour to the south would be drastically curtailed without the assistance of the North/South Touring Scheme.

All the northern companies claimed to enjoy touring to the south, and were particularly positive about dealing with venue managers in the south as compared to their counterparts in the north. They found venue managers in the south more approachable, easier to deal with in that the decision-making process was more straightforward, and demonstrating in general a greater knowledge of and interest in theatre.

### **7.9.2 Republic of Ireland Companies' Viewpoint**

Views appear to differ depending on the amount of subsidy that a company receives. Now that An Chomhairle Ealaíon has deregulated touring there is even less need for companies in receipt of larger amounts of multi-annual funding to access the Scheme. Some have stated that the Scheme is "more bother than it is worth" as they only accessed a small amount of money to facilitate touring to a small number of venues. Those companies accessing the Scheme tend to be small-scale touring. There have been no approaches to the Scheme in recent years by the 'mid-

scale', more established companies, although the Abbey Theatre received £16,000 to tour to the north through other mechanisms.

The Scheme is very important however to partially subsidised companies which tend also to be the newer companies that wish to widen the public platform for their work. They work within serious financial restraints, usually on a profit share basis or on a low guaranteed fee to each performer. Any source of additional funding is going to be valuable to these companies.

Non-subsidised companies consulted during Theatre Shop in Dublin would be delighted to have access to the Scheme, but are not currently eligible.

### **7.9.3 Northern Ireland Receiving Venues' View Point**

The Old Museum Arts Centre regularly receives touring proposals from small-scale southern based companies. Its key staff were not aware of the existence of the North/South Scheme and were not therefore in a position to advise companies to apply. It was remarked that generally touring proposals from southern companies do not allow much lead-in time and programming at short notice is not feasible for many northern venues.

Five of the regional theatres in the north have formed the Association of Regional Theatres to facilitate communication and planning (The Burnavon, The Marketplace, The Riverside, The Ardhoven, The Millennium Forum). Members felt that there was no shortage of touring proposals from small-scale companies in the south and from England. They would like to have more access to the larger, mid-scale companies such as the Abbey, Rough Magic and Druid, and enough advance notice from the companies to ensure programme availability. It was a concern for the regional venues that mid-scale companies tend to look for week-long runs which are difficult for the venues to sustain in terms of local audiences. The ART members feel that it is the responsibility of the Arts Councils to help address the gap in product as it is affecting the abilities of regional venues to build audiences for theatre. Northern venues reported that fees requested by small-scale southern touring companies tend to be lower than their counterparts in the north.

### **7.9.4 Republic of Ireland Receiving Venues' view point**

There is a low level of awareness of the Scheme in venues in the Republic of Ireland. Venue managers take Northern Ireland producing companies on the basis of what they can afford, whether they like the project or admire the company's previous work. However they might be less likely to book Northern Ireland companies in the future if their fees suddenly become higher.

## **8. North/South Touring Scheme - SWOT Analysis**

### **Strengths**

- The two main groups that have benefited most from the Scheme to date are the northern-based theatre companies and the southern venues. This indicates that the Scheme has been successful in achieving one of its original aims and objectives with regard to incentivising cross border touring by northern companies.
- Applications to the Scheme in 2001 have been at their highest level to date demonstrating a growing demand.
- Partially-subsidised and non-subsidised companies in the south value the scheme very highly.
- Northern-based theatre companies are in unanimous agreement that they could not tour to the south without the support of the North/South Touring Scheme as southern venues would not be able to afford to pay the real cost. The fluctuations in the currency exchange rate mean that fees required by northern companies would be all the more prohibitive to southern venues without the subsidy that the Scheme offers.
- Given the fact that venues in the south are facing the same issues as their counterparts in the north with regard to lack of suitable touring drama product, any Scheme which aims to offer more choice to venues is a positive thing. Given the shortage of touring product, this situation would only be exacerbated were the Scheme to fold.
- The top booking venues in the south within the Scheme's data are all run as professional full-time venues and all are in receipt of An Chomhairle Ealaion subsidy to varying degrees. The North South Scheme is an indirect method of programming subsidy to them, allowing them access to a greater variety of product at an affordable price in an environment of limited choice at present.

### **Weaknesses**

- Southern companies have benefited, but have not accessed the scheme with the same regularity as northern companies. Northern venues have not therefore benefited to the same degree with regard to choice of product. The Scheme has only partly achieved its objective to incentivise cross border touring by southern companies, however it is clear that there are other factors that need to be addressed in this regard which go beyond the capacity of this relatively limited and sharply defined Fund.
- The Scheme is not open to non-subsidised companies.

- The promotion of the Scheme by the Arts Councils appears to be weak.
- Evaluation and Monitoring of the Scheme is limited and there are gaps in information.

### **Opportunities**

- Geography is an influential factor with regard to the higher uptake from the north. There are only a handful of regional venues in the north that will book touring theatre. The touring data gathered within the Scheme demonstrates in comparison the huge range of venues in the south with an interest in theatre, making it easier for northern companies to extend their runs. The Scheme therefore offers a valuable opportunity for northern companies to address some of the needs of southern venues, and for Northern Ireland companies to tour for longer thereby making productions more cost-effective.
- The companies which utilise the Scheme tend to be small-scale touring companies, suited to relatively small venues. There are currently no mid-scale touring theatre companies based in the north. Mid-scale, more established companies in the south have not been accessing the Scheme, but nor do they appear to have been touring regularly in the south. There is an opportunity to address this issue in the context of a broader touring strategy in response to the issues also raised in the Auditoria report and the northern Theatre Exchange.
- With a wide range of new venues coming on stream since the inception of the Scheme, there is an ongoing opportunity for the Fund to assist in providing product to a growing market.

### **Threats**

- It is highly likely that the absence in recent years of a mid-scale receiving theatre in Belfast with a programming budget is having a detrimental effect on the quantity of mid-scale touring from the south. Larger, more established companies would tend to consider touring north only if it was possible to play Belfast, the main urban centre. The Lyric Theatre regularly receives touring proposals from southern companies which are indicative of demand, but it aims to be a producing house and is funded for that purpose, so it is inappropriate for it to programme visiting productions on a regular basis.
- Audience development is a major issue. There is a lack of mid-scale touring theatre in the north. Most venues in the north cannot sustain visiting productions for more than one performance.
- The de-regulation of funding in the south does not necessarily improve the touring situation as companies in receipt of lower levels

of revenue may have a policy commitment to touring which cannot be implemented without additional resources from the North/South Touring Scheme. The Scheme may not be significant to companies in receipt of high levels of multi-annual funding, but it is definitely deemed essential by those companies with only small amounts of revenue and the termination of the Fund would curtail their ability to tour to the north.

- Many companies do not see regional touring as prestigious or interesting. There is a “been there, done that” mentality which does not help the programming demands of many of the regional venues. If the Arts Councils were to impose a touring agenda on its client companies, that would only be a short-term solution. Also companies would inevitably look for additional funding to make touring a larger part of their brief. There is no additional finance available through the Arts Council to facilitate this shift in policy. The motivation needs to come part from companies themselves.
- There is a limit to the amount of money available to the Arts Councils. In this current year it is anticipated that there will be no uplift in voted funds to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Lottery funding will be reduced from £8 million to £6 million. The Arts Council is bound to find ways of delivering arts strategies, which meet the government directives including emphasis on Targeting Social Need, Youth, and the Regions.
- The Arts Councils are constantly evolving to meet the new directives put upon them by Government. Artists and companies do not necessarily share the issues of government. Generally companies have adapted very well to the new vocabulary. However much of the work produced does not seem to be put in any context that considers, Audience, Finance and or Geography/Sustainability

## 9. North/South Touring Scheme - Recommendations

- There are very obvious benefits arising from the Scheme to both companies and venues in the north and south and for this reason it is recommended that the Scheme should continue to operate with support from both Arts Councils. The quantity of cross border touring will decrease if the Scheme ceases to exist.
- The amount of funding invested in the Scheme should be reviewed annually in the light of demand, outputs, and other strategic developments with regard to touring.
- The work of Theatre Shop and Theatre Exchange is vital in terms of improving communication between venues and companies. Northern companies and venues have not been well represented at Theatre Shop. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland should emphasise to its clients the importance and value of them attending such events if issues about lack of product and touring are to be addressed. The Theatre Exchange in the north should be opened out again to the participation of southern companies and venues. This could be made a condition of grant assistance from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon should encourage and assist southern companies to attend where appropriate. The issues are the same for the touring theatre sector on both sides of the border and should be addressed collectively.
- The Arts Councils should review the forms used for the Scheme to ensure that they are capturing as much relevant data as possible. A post-event form specific to the scheme must be developed. Outstanding monitoring information should be followed up.
- A wide range of issues have been identified both north and south of the border with regard to audience development and touring through the work of Auditoria, Theatre Shop, Theatre Exchange, and in the context of this review. Both Arts Councils need to continue to work with the sector to ensure that key issues are addressed such as shortages and gaps in provision with regard to touring product. 'Views of theatre in Ireland' 1995 suggested in its touring section that the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon "identify three or four production companies that have shown a commitment and an ability to tour and build in a touring element in their annual grants". Such an approach by both Arts Councils, linked to specific outcomes, is felt to be the most practical way of ensuring an adequate quota of touring.

- **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Brief**

- ***Compare current contexts with those, which gave rise to the instigation of the scheme: differing equity rates, stipulations; variety of funded and non-funded venues; currency exchange rates***
- ***Map traffic from scheme's inception and identify and explain 'gaps'***
- ***Analyse disparities in fees, income and cost effectiveness***
- ***Present SWOT analysis***
- ***Evaluate effectiveness of the scheme in encouraging cross border touring***

### **Summary Methodology**

- Audit and analyse key aspects of context from inception of scheme to current day and issues arising, through consultation with main stakeholders – meetings with Drama Officers of both the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and An Chomhairle *Ealaíon*, desk research, and questionnaires to current and previous beneficiaries of the scheme.
- Summarise information gathered and evaluated in the form of a SWOT analysis.
- Use information gathered to assess the effectiveness of the scheme in achieving its main aims, and to develop and evaluate options and recommendations with regard to the way forward.

### **Timescale**

The Drama Officer of the Arts Council commissioned a programme of 10 days' work as proposed within the quotation. The agreed deadline for submission of the report was Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

### **Team**

#### **Angela McCloskey**

Angela has a first class degree from Kent University in Drama and Literature and a post-graduate diploma in Cultural Management. She worked with Tinderbox Theatre Company as its first Administrator from 1989 – 1992, followed by a period of three years as Arts Officer for North Down Borough Council and six years as Arts Officer of Belfast City Council. Her wide range of experience in the arts sector includes event and project planning and management, programming, fund-raising, policy development, audience development, business planning, assessment and monitoring of grants, and desk and field research. Over the years she has

actively participated on a wide range of sectoral working groups and advisory panels including the Arts Council's Performing Arts Advisory Panel, the Arts Managers Group, the Arts Training Network, the Belfast Community Arts Co-ordinating Group, the Belfast Arts Marketing Group, the Theatre Exchange Working Group, and the Ulster Youth Theatre Steering Group.

### **Patricia McBride**

Patricia Mc Bride has been actively involved in arts management practise for over 15 years. Her management experience includes PR and marketing and both company and venue management. She is currently director of An Grianan Theatre in Donegal where she is responsible for all aspects of programming and financial management. Previously she worked at the Lyric Theatre, Belfast for 6 years as Administrator. Other work experience includes four years as company manager for Charabanc Theatre Company, Belfast, General Manager of Proteus Theatre Company, Basingstoke and PR/Marketing Officer for Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke. She is currently a Council Member of the National Theatre Society of Ireland and a Board Member of Kabosh.

