



Arts Council of Northern

**ART FORM AND SPECIALIST  
AREA POLICY 2013-2018**

**MUSIC & OPERA**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Awarding funds from  
 The National Lottery®

[www.artscouncil-ni.org](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org)

## Introduction

Northern Ireland is rightly proud of its musical heritage, one that boasts institutions and individuals (not only performers, but composers directors, impresarios and others too) that have made a significant impact on the world stage.

The Arts Council recognises the historical value of music and opera in its constituent cultural and social traditions and acknowledges the powerful contribution it makes in diverse community contexts, where it is one of the most powerful vehicles for promoting the expression of values and identity.

The Council also celebrate music's unique ability to bring people together and to break down the barriers to communication between those contexts. Therefore we are firmly committed to enabling people in Northern Ireland to experience the highest quality music across a variety of styles music such as western classical/contemporary concert music, opera, music theatre and musicals, jazz and improvised music, contemporary popular music, new music, world music and traditional music, as well as amateur/voluntary music activities such as bands and music festivals, and community music practices.

Following the Council's review of the provision of Opera in Northern Ireland and publication of its Opera Strategy in 2010, NI Opera was established. Through NI Opera the Arts Council is committed to providing the highest quality spectacle of opera to the widest possible audience through a variety of mechanisms including taking opera to site-specific places, engaging with local communities and young people underpinned with imaginative programming and quality casting.

The focus of the Council's spending on music and opera is on professional infrastructure and performance as a means of delivering high quality musical experiences to local people as both participants and audiences. The most visible way in which the Council supports the music sector is through a range of grant schemes, directly and through partnership programmes with other organisations (British Council, Performing Rights Society Foundation for Music, and other Arts Councils in the UK and Ireland) which are available to musicians and organisations.

Co-operation and partnerships between organisations are increasingly becoming essential in strengthening and overcoming difficulties faced in the current infrastructure.

Arts Council offers the popular Take it Away scheme to make interest free loans available to people in Northern Ireland who want to buy a musical instrument of their choice through registered member retailers. Take it away

(Northern Ireland) works by letting musicians spread the cost of the new instrument over 10 months, making it more affordable to get playing.

Recently the Arts Council launched a new Music Touring Programme (2013-2016) to develop strategic touring and promoter development in Northern Ireland for under-represented genres such as jazz, world, chamber and contemporary music.

With the ongoing developments of new technology, access to music is greater than ever. The Council recognises the importance of live music provision and the positive impact it can have on education, economic and social needs. Council also believes that it is of the utmost importance for individuals to have the opportunity from a young age to participate in all forms of music.

## Funding Objectives

- maintain and increase quality, excellence and variety of music provision across the different spheres of music activity through artists and organisations: from education to participation, from composition to performance;
- support the creation and development of new and innovative music including fusion and cross-genre;
- aid musicians and composers to achieve the fullness of their professional and artistic potential;
- promote partnerships by supporting joint projects across the sector which focuses on building up a more sustainable infrastructure needed for a variety of music-making;
- encourage organisations to link with the commercial sector especially in relation to any opportunity for the highest quality music to reach wider audiences through digital and broadcast platforms;
- ensure that artists from Northern Ireland are showcased via assisting, and promoting, music festivals and innovative programming, tours and events;
- raise the profile of Northern Irish music by assisting initiatives aimed at presenting the best both at home and abroad;

- encourage talent development to both new and young musicians/artists through supporting programmes of workshops, mentoring, masterclasses and performance opportunities;
- play an active role in music education including support for youth music organisations;
- develop strategic touring and promoter development initiatives especially for under-represented genres such as jazz, world, chamber and contemporary music
- develop opportunities for people with the least engagement or access to participate in music;
- improve communication, cohesion and partnership working by facilitating regular sectoral forums;

## Additional Information

### **Music Strategy, 2013-2018**

[http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/artform-documents/final\\_music\\_strategy\\_2013.pdf](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/images/uploads/artform-documents/final_music_strategy_2013.pdf)

### **'Ambitions for the Arts' Five Year Arts Strategy, 2013-2018**

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy>

### **Art Form and Specialist Area Policies, 2013 – 2018**

<http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts>

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**Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.**

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