



BALLET
IRELAND

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / CEO STATEMENT

In 2021, the company was able to perform for the first time in a year and a half. It was such a joyous occasion to be back in a theatre in front of audiences. The early part of the year had been very difficult with continuing lockdowns due to the Covid-19 global pandemic. If anything it was an even more challenging period than the lockdowns of 2020 as it was more prolonged and there seemed to be no sense of when society and theatres may re-open. Once again we juggled dates from our 2020 calendar and hoped they might come to fruition this time. We continued to offer our artists online classes and made plans to film work as more and more dance companies pivoted to find ways to make and disseminate work digitally.

We made plans with Luke Sweetman and his wonderfully talented team at 'Little Beast' to film and release 'Stokes Through the Tail' by Marguerite Donlon. This work was part of the Bold Moves programme postponed from 2020. However, time frames shifted yet again from March to July in anticipation of better times during the summer months. The challenge of working through Covid restrictions and guidelines

was immense. Our dancers quarantined before we began and then lived in a bubble together whilst rehearsing and filming. Finally we finished rehearsals and got into the theatre to film. The regular testing regime and living and working together was a tall order and not many sectors would have employees prepared to sacrifice a month of their lives in this way. I have to thank our dancers and the team for their support in getting this in the can, they were superb.

BI continued to work with the IBTA (Irish Ballet Teachers Association) supporting the committee constantly updating and refining guidelines for the safe resumption of dance classes in-between lockdowns. In August, we hosted our Summer Intensive for vocational students. This was conducted following all of the government guidelines and all participants and tutors wore masks throughout the week as they were not 'bubbled'. Huge kudos to these young talented students who worked so hard in warm conditions in DanceHouse doing such strenuous physical work.

Following our AGM, we said goodbye to three of our Board who stepped down; Anne Marie Barton, Eilis Quinlan and our Chair Gerardine Connolly. We owe such gratitude most especially to our Chair Gerardine for her great work in building support for the company and leading the way with fundraising establishing our now annual Fundraising Luncheon. Gerardine joined the Board in December 2014 and became Chair in January 2017 and guided the company through both wonderful and difficult times with such clear vision and kindness and made a huge contribution to Ballet Ireland. Likewise to Eilis Quinlan, who joined us in 2013, for all her advice and careful oversight of the company's financial wellbeing over many years. Geraldine O'Loane stepped down at the end of the year due to work commitments. A huge thank you and recognition to the Board members both current and past who work tirelessly on behalf of Ballet Ireland. Following the AGM, Una O'Hare was appointed as new Chair and we welcomed Christopher Clinton Conway, former CEO of the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago and Simon Henry, Chief Financial Officer at Three Ireland, to the Board.

In September, we were back to the studio to create a new Nutcracker for the company and our audiences. This was to be reimaged by long-time Ballet Ireland collaborator, Morgann Runacre-Temple. Set in a department store with sets and costumes by Jack Scullion and music adapted and composed by Tom Lane, this new Nutcracker Sweeties has Irish themes and influences. We knew this tour would be challenging and with guidelines meaning most bars in theatres remained closed. We decided to make it a 'one acter' so that we would make things easier for theatre staff to manage. The new production was a huge success. Sadly however, rising Covid numbers meant theatres could only operate at 50% capacity by mid-November meaning houses were small. Then in late December, the 8pm closing of theatres ruling and after months of managing to stay safe, Covid struck cast members and we had to cancel our final performances of Nutcracker Sweeties. Although it was a sudden and abrupt end to the season and the year we were very fortunate to have fulfilled almost all of our dates in the tour. It was no mean feat and again special thanks to all of the artists and most especially the staff who work so hard to make it happen. 2021 was most certainly a better year than the previous one.

Special thanks to the Arts Council for the outstanding leadership and financial support shown to the whole of the Artistic community of Ireland.

ANNE MAHER
BALLET IRELAND, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / CEO



2021 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Ballet Ireland has always been committed to best health and safety practices, and we recognise the wise and preventative direction we received from the Taoiseach and representatives of the Government. We take the threat of COVID-19 very seriously and willingly accept any and all steps in order to ensure our health, your health, and the health of our community. We salute all of the frontline staff in our hospitals and beyond, who are looking after the sick and saving lives. They are continuing to do incredibly heroic work.

Ballet Ireland is Ireland's only professional ballet company, bringing new narrative-led ballets to Irish audiences. To date, Ballet Ireland has mounted over 30 seasons of work, and has had a profound impact on the landscape of Dance and the Arts in Ireland.



STROKES THROUGH THE TAIL

Summary

In July 2021, we filmed Marguerite Donlon's 'Strokes Through the Tail'.

Finding inspiration in Mozart's Symphony No. 40, six performers combine virtuosic dancing with buckets of humour and a delightful hint of irreverence. "The dancers perform like black-and-white music notes moving in space," she says, "at first clearly personifying the music, but as the piece develops these notes/dancers become six very strong and individual personalities." Critics have raved about the piece's "exquisite choreography performed to timeless music" (Chicago Sun-Times), with the Chicago Tribune remarking, "The whinnying Mozart depicted in Amadeus would have enjoyed a good horse-laugh at Donlon's piece... Donlon is unafraid to go against the grain of the music, creating a counterpoint of delicious, never malicious, irony."

'Strokes Through the Tail' has previously been performed on some of the world's most iconic stages, including the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, at the Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and at Chicago Symphony Center with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.



SUMMER INTENSIVE

Summary

In August 2021, we hosted our Summer Intensive at DanceHouse, Dublin. This is a unique Summer Intensive providing students with the training required for ballet dancers of today.

Students trained with world renowned tutors in ballet, pilates, pointe work and repertoire. Due to COVID-19 restrictions still being in place, a reduced number of students took part.



PARTICIPATION NUMBERS:

23 students





EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Primary Schools

Summary

We continued to develop and promote our primary schools programme throughout late 2021. Our strategy has evolved in close collaboration with schools in the Dublin area.

SCHOOLS:

Our Education Officer worked with students in St. Patrick's JNS Diswellstown, Scoil Mhuire JNS Blakestown, St. Catherine's JNS Cabra and St. Patrick's BNS, Newbridge.

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS:

2,825 students took part in the programme with 113 workshops taking place on school premises.

"Ballet exposes children to many new perspectives and experiences. Whether you decide to pursue sport or any form of dance, ballet is a wonderful preparation. Posture and confidence are the key things we are looking to develop in the school due to so many sedentary lifestyles. We see the confidence in our pupils increase after only a few classes."

EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Teacher's Week



Summary

Dancing has an intrinsic appeal. It is an enjoyable, non-competitive, physical activity that can be creatively adapted to individual children's abilities and interests. Creating work through dance and music is naturally engaging for all children and helps develop attentional focus and listening skills. Dancing enhances communication skills and offers unpressured opportunities for creative expression and leadership among children of all ages, experiences, and abilities.

This unique course gives schoolteachers a secure understanding of how to teach dance, using simple, clear methods, easy steps, and straightforward dance vocabularies. Teachers are introduced to the fundamental aspects of dance education: the class structure, an understanding of anatomy in relation to dance, how music is used, composed, and selected for dance, and how dance relates to drama and narrative expression.

This pilot programme was a week in length and was led by Ballet Ireland's Education Officer, Stephen Brennan, alongside specialists in several complementary areas, providing workshops in dance, anatomy, music, and mime.

DATES:

Monday 12 - Friday 16 July 2021

PARTICIPATION NUMBERS:

5 Primary school teachers took part



NUTCRACKER SWEETIES

Summary

During Christmas season 2021, the curtain rose on Ballet Ireland's Nutcracker Sweeties, a new production of one of the world's favourite ballets.

The production is set in a department store in Dublin where Ciara and her brother, Fionn, go on a shopping trip with their parents. They wander off from their parents and the magic of Nutcracker and Christmas begins... The two are rescued by the Nutcracker doll who comes to life before Ciara shakes a snow globe creating a glorious blizzard of snowflakes. The Sugar Plum Fairy greets them leading Ciara into the kingdom of the sweets where the beautiful Christmas windows come to life.

Choreographed by Morgann Runacre-Temple, this exciting Irish presentation of the festive classic, performed by a cast of world-class dancers, appeals to audiences of all ages with its fairy-tale magic, beautiful costumes and a re-imagined Tchaikovsky score. A tale of wondrous adventure that combines to form one of the most delectable Christmas confections imaginable.



TOUR DATES:

Friday 5 November - Thursday 23 December 2021



ATTENDANCE NUMBERS:

4951 audience members attended.



2021 SEASON NUMBERS

22 professional dancers hired
27 performances took place
1,656 students took part in workshops
92 workshops took place
13,353 social media followers
4,774 newsletter subscribers
130,672 website visitors

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Balance Sheet	31/12/2021	31/12/2020
Members Funds	€ 72,091	€ 72,091
Income & Expenditure		
Income	€ 717,653	€ 342,750
Operating costs	€ 717,653	€ 342,750
Interest	€ nil	€ nil
Net surplus / (deficit)	€ nil	€ nil

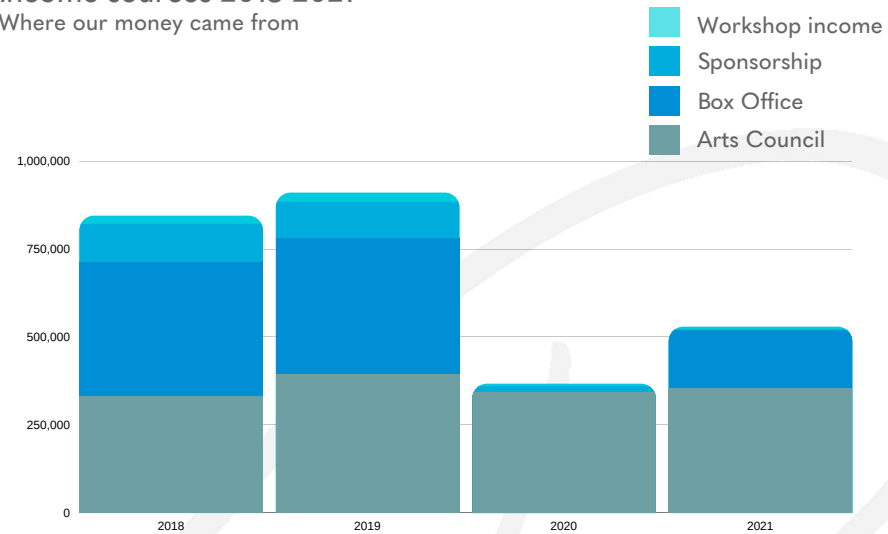


Key financial facts	2021	2020
Touring & Box Office revenue	€ 164,306	€ nil
Donations & Sponsorship revenue	€ 2,818	€ 15,247
Arts Council funding	€ 354,177	€ 344,500
Cost of touring & production	€ 317,377	€ 40,264
Marketing & Promotion	€ 76,055	€ 5,612
Salaries & Social Welfare costs	€ 254,074	€ 229,546

KEY STATISTICS

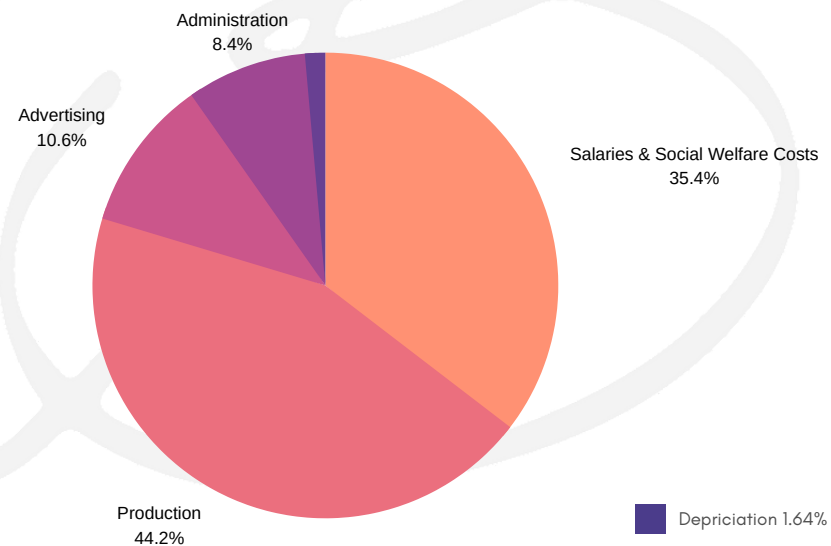
Income sources 2018-2021

Where our money came from



Expenditure 2021

What we spent our money on



STATEMENT FROM OUR CHAIR

I was delighted and honoured to be invited to take over as Chair of Ballet Ireland in 2021.

I would like to thank my predecessor Gerardine Connolly SC for her direction and leadership over the last number of years.

2021 continued to be a challenging year. Ballet Ireland's Spring Season was deferred due to Covid-19 but the pandemic restrictions lifted somewhat during the year and our annual Summer courses proceeded with social distancing guidelines in place.

Autumn saw the re-opening of the theatres, again with restrictions particularly with regard to capacity, which was capped at 50%. But many congratulations to Ballet Ireland's CEO/Artistic Director Anne Maher who had the courage and foresight to produce a new version of Nutcracker 'Nutcracker Sweeties'. It is testament to the commitment of the dancers and choreographer who demonstrated fortitude, resilience and strength as they rehearsed whilst wearing masks and observing other Covid-19 guidelines.

Three directors, Eilis Quinlan, Anne Marie Barton and Geraldine O'Loane retired; I would like to thank them for their contribution to the Board over many years. We welcome the new directors, Simon Henry and Christopher Clinton Conway.

2021 saw the publication of Ballet Ireland's new Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025 'Creating Space for Success'. The board and I look forward to working with the executive to ensure implementation of this ambitious and forward-thinking plan.

Despite the challenges of 2021, financially the company remains in a strong position. This is due to careful financial management of continued Arts Council funding and of course Government support through the EWSS. This places the company in a positive position as we look toward 2022.

I thank the executives and the board for their continued dedication, focus and commitment to making Ballet Ireland a first-class ballet company.



UNA O'HARE
BALLET IRELAND, CHAIR



BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MANAGEMENT

BALLET IRELAND'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVES IS COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE. BALLET IRELAND AIMS TO COMPLY WITH THE CHARITIES GOVERNANCE CODE.

PATRON

President: Michael D. Higgins

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Una O'Hare (Chair)
Louise Carpendale (Secretary)
Christopher Clinton Conway
Simon Henry
Heather Kennedy

STAFF

Artistic Director: Anne Maher
General Manager: Martin Lindinger
Education Officer: Stephen Brennan
Marketing Manager: Jeanette Keane

The board's functions are to oversee the organisation's mission, ensuring proper financial management and maintaining good governance. In 2021, board meetings were held in January, March, April, June, July, August, September, October & November.

The work of the board is supported by four sub-committees:

Finance Committee - Chair: Una O'Hare, Simon Henry
In 2021, meetings were held in March

Governance Committee - Chair: Louise Carpendale, Una O'Hare
In 2021, meetings were held in May, June & November.

Fundraising Committee - Chair: Geraldine O'Loane, Christopher Clinton Conway
In 2021, meetings were held in September & November.

Public Engagement Committee - Chair: Heather Kennedy, Una O'Hare
In 2021, meetings were held in February & March.

The board of directors is a non-executive board, encompassing skills and expertise in marketing, fundraising, legal and financial affairs. Directors are co-opted and endorsed by the board. We maintain up-to-date Directors' profiles on our website: <https://www.balletireland.ie/the-company/board-of-directors/>

CULTURAL PARTNERS & FUNDERS

SUPPORT FROM OUR FUNDING BODIES, MEDIA SPONSORS AND PATRONS, ALLOW US TO BRING PRODUCTIONS OF THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL QUALITY TO AUDIENCES THROUGHOUT IRELAND.

MAIN FUNDER



SUPPORTED BY



MEDIA PARTNERS



THE IRISH TIMES

PRIMARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME PARTNER



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DONOR

Billy Gaff

CORPORATE SPONSOR

Brookwood Physiotherapy & Pilates Clinic brookwoodphysio.com

FRIENDS

THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF OUR FRIENDS WE ARE ABLE TO PRESENT THE WORK WE DO. OUR FRIENDS PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO THAT ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL. THIS ENSURES THAT BALLET IRELAND CAN GROW ARTISTICALLY AND PROVIDE AN EXTENSIVE CURRICULUM-BASED EDUCATION OUTREACH PROGRAMME.

DIAMOND FRIENDS

John Healy
Jane O'Callaghan
Anne Reihill

RUBY FRIENDS

Chad Gilmer iPLANiT
Andrew Jones
Cynthia Ó Dúnlaing F.R.A.D.

EMERALD FRIENDS

Debbie Allen, Debbie Allen School of Dance
Olive Braiden
Deirdre Brennan, The Peelo School of Dance
Rachel Goode, The Goode School of Dance
Azile Hooper
John Horgan
Hanna Kivelä
Eamonn McCusker
Marie Moloney
Miriam O'Callaghan
John & Sarah Sheehy
Aideen Stevens
Brian Walsh
Mariad Whiskar

SAPPHIRE FRIENDS

Rose and Sara Chester
Molly & Chloe Keane
Brian MacDomhnaill
Kristina Wladimirowna Mastel
Ingrid Nachstern, Night Star Dance Company
Maria Noonan
Dara Pierce, The Ballet Academy
Ally Riordan

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