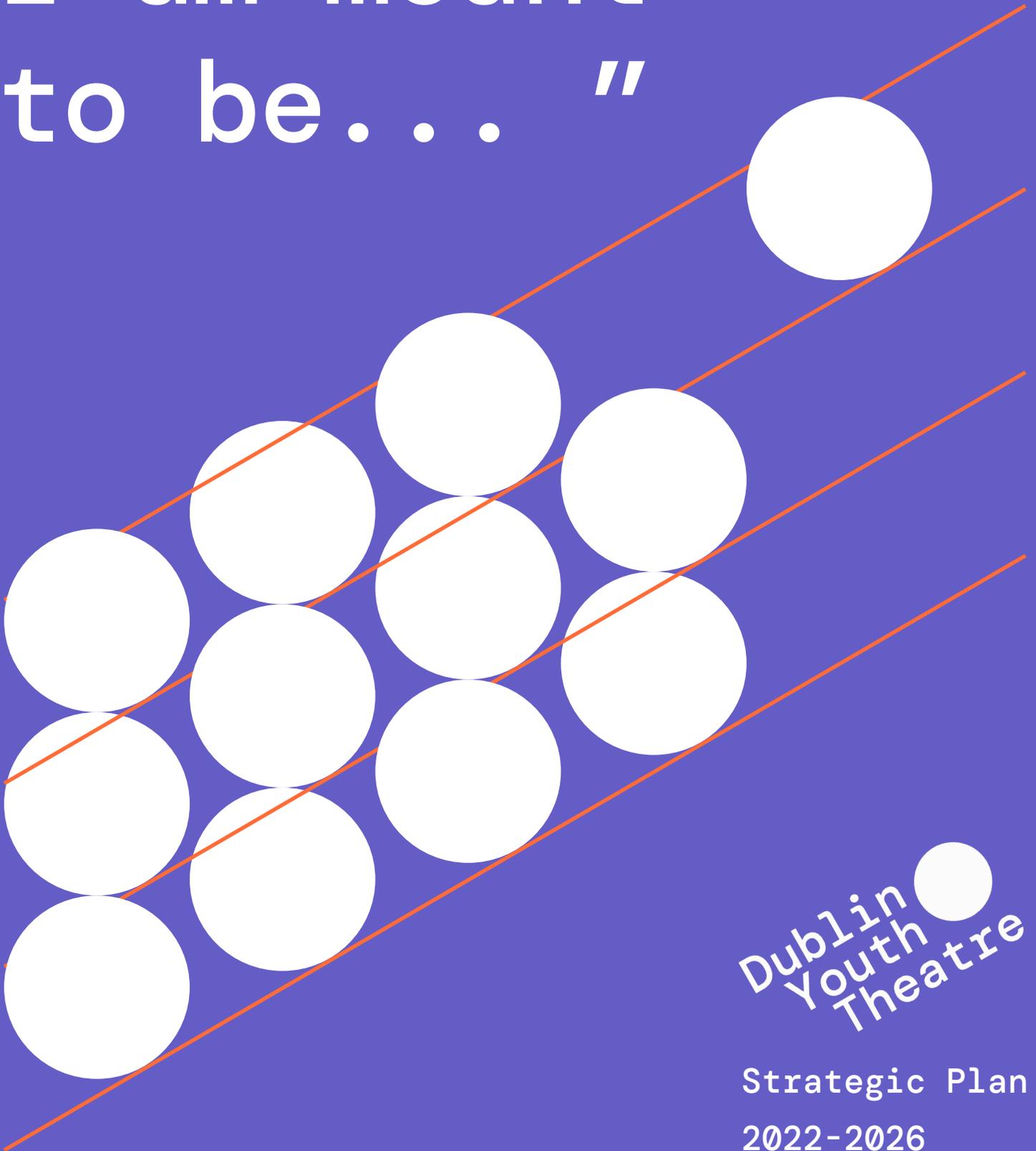


“ Becoming
the person
I am meant
to be... ”



Dublin
Youth
Theatre

Strategic Plan
2022-2026

DYT is...

Fulfilling.

*DYT brings so much fulfilment to my life,
I genuinely don't know where I'd be without it.*

*DYT is a safe space
where I can connect to
people who have a common
interest / goals.*

*DYT has made me realise
that my true passion in
life is drama, and the
community around it.*

*I feel appreciated here, in a way I don't feel
throughout other aspects of my life.*

*It is helping me become the person
I am meant to be.*

Participants' contributions
at DYT Members' Workshop



Vision Statement

Our vision is for
Dublin Youth Theatre
to be a beacon for
young people in Dublin -
creating a sense of place
and belonging for our
members, instilling a love
of art, culture, and a
fluency in critical thinking
and creative freedom,
no matter their differences.

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Introduction

At Dublin Youth Theatre, our focus and drive is the personal, social and artistic development of young people in Dublin, through the medium of theatre.

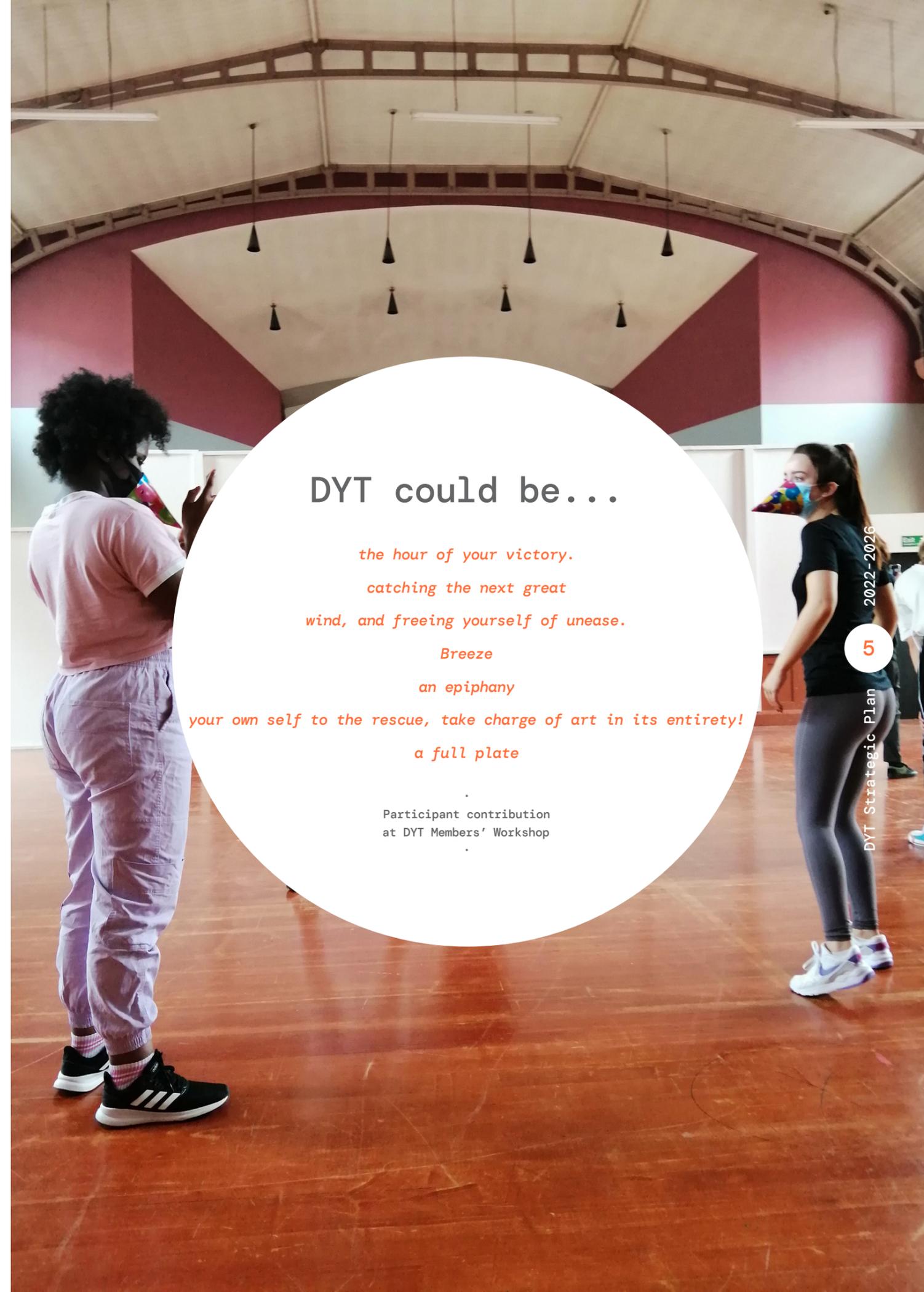
Since our foundation in 1977, Dublin Youth Theatre (DYT) has forged a unique contribution to the worlds of theatre and youth work, consistently breaking new ground in youth theatre. Always progressive, a little radical, and always forward thinking, we provided a space for young people to have a voice - before youth voice became an area of interest for national policy.

This new Strategic Plan for DYT is published as we celebrate our 45th anniversary in 2022, and seek to identify a suitable space to establish our new home in the heart of Dublin. In 2019 we sold our historic building on Gardiner St, creating a resource for the organisation that allows us to be ambitious as we plan up to our 50th year in 2027.

Our last strategy had two overarching aims - to continue to support our members in the realisation of their artistic potential, and to develop and promote the identity of DYT as an innovative producer of quality artistic work and a leader in youth and the field of youth arts. These aims continue to be relevant in our work. But we're ready for more.

This new Strategic Plan will inform and centre inclusion and access through meaningful, specific and purposeful invitations to communities we haven't yet reached. We commit to more effective communications, equipping members and alumni with what they need to be advocates for us; and clear and ongoing stakeholder engagement, as we continue the work to identify and secure a permanent home for DYT, to ensure we're serving all the communities of Dublin.

Dublin Youth Theatre is a proud founding member of Youth Theatre Ireland, and we are funded by the Arts Council, Dublin City Council, and the City of Dublin Youth Services Board. The organisation is overseen by a skilled and passionate Board.



DYT could be...

the hour of your victory.

catching the next great

wind, and freeing yourself of unease.

Breeze

an epiphany

your own self to the rescue, take charge of art in its entirety!

a full plate

Participant contribution
at DYT Members' Workshop

The Context

Our Strategic Plan is written and will be delivered in the spirit of the Arts Council's 'Making Great Art Work 2016-2025' strategy, which focuses on the interdependent priorities of the artist and public engagement, alongside the belief that the more people who engage in the arts and the greater their social diversity, the more significant the societal benefits deriving from their investments.

The Arts Council's 'Equality, Human Rights and Diversity (EHRD) Strategy and Policy' (2019) strives to respect, support and ensure inclusion of all voices and cultures that make up Ireland today, from all sections of society, existing and new communities, from all social backgrounds, ethnicities and traditions. The objectives of this policy have begun to be implemented by DYT, and we continue to work hard to reach out to new communities.

As we write our strategy, The Arts Council's 'Young People, Children and Education (YPCE) Strategy' is being developed in consultation with the sector. The emerging ambitions of this strategy will inform our work going forward, and we believe, will complement our own ambitions, stated here.

The artists who work with DYT are paid and valued, in line with the Arts Council's 'Paying the Artist' policy, and we will continue to do this, while looking at the diversity of our selection panels, our workshop facilitators, etc. as per EHRD ambitions.

The 'Dublin City Council Arts Plan 2014-2018' is structured to assist the public to access the arts, to facilitate artists' development, and to enrich the cultural experience of the city. Ongoing engagement will ensure our work continues to be important to DCC as new Arts Plans are developed.

Our long-standing relationship with the City of Dublin Youth Services Board is a mutually beneficial one, as their mission is to promote youth work and volunteerism, and to enable young people to realise their potential within their communities, and within a changing society.

We will continue to advocate for the importance of our work with our funders, ensuring we are aligned with local and national policy ambitions in our impact and outcomes, and how we report on them.

My life in DYT...

- 1. the social elements - I made actual friends for the first time and connected with them more than anyone else in my life*
- 2. affordability - DYT payments are very fair and do not discriminate against less well-off people (and because other theatre groups are expensive)*
- 3. democracy - everyone plays a role and everyone contributes equally to workshops and productions*

Participant contribution
at DYT Members' Workshop



Developing Our Strategy

Work on this Strategic Plan was begun in Q4 2021 and completed in Q1 2022, as the protocols and protections around the COVID-19 pandemic were beginning to be relaxed. This has given us new confidence to be ambitious in our planning for the future.

The process included workshops with our Executive and Board to ensure a shared understanding of diversity, inclusion and accessibility, and a refresher on governance; as well as one-to-one interviews with Funders and other key stakeholders. A workshop with a group of DYT members, facilitated by Anna Galligan was a defining moment in the process, allowing us to sense-check our draft new purpose, vision and mission, and to hear from young people about their ambitions for the organisation, and what is most important to them about DYT. Our new strategic ambition was also presented to Company Members.

We are proud of how resilient the organisation proved to be during the global COVID health emergency of 2020-2022. DYT moved successfully online, continuing to deliver workshops and activities for members, including our annual production in 2020 which attracted new audiences outside of Ireland. We successfully recruited new members through online audition processes in 2021. Workshops were safely moved back to delivery in-person when protocols allowed.



What Makes DYT Unique?

Dublin Youth Theatre creates a safe space for young people aged 14 to 22, to explore who they are through theatre and creativity, be that artistically or socially. That space is fundamental to what we do. Our members meet, work, and take creative risks with other young people from communities they might not meet in their normal lives, developing friendships that may not otherwise happen.

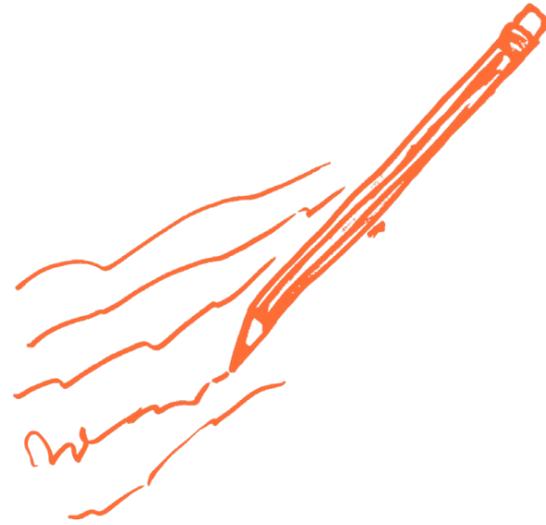
As one of Ireland's leading youth theatres, the work of DYT feeds the larger theatre and cultural ecosystem, creating skills in young people who will have the arts in their lives, throughout their lives.

We asked our members what they think we should communicate about DYT, and what they should consider communicating to their peers about DYT:

- It's a community, an inclusive space
- Experience - you learn more than you'd think
- Cooperation - you have an input / say
- More funding is needed
- There's lots of variety - you learn to be critics and actors. If someone likes writing - tell them about DYT; if they are a good impressionist - tell them to join DYT. There's a perception that if you join DYT you'll have to act. People say 'I can't be on the stage', but there's loads of different things to do in DYT
- Tell people when there's shows on
- Tell stories about DYT - name drop! 'I learned this in DYT this week'
- It goes into every aspect of your life
- It's very different to a stage school

Our Stakeholders

- Our Members
- Their Parents and Families
- Our Funders
- Our Alumni
- The Public/Our Audience
- The Wider Arts Sector
- Other Theatre Companies and Artists
- The City
- Our Executive and Board
- The Media
- The Business Community



The backbone of DYT is made up of our members, past and present, their families, and the artists who are driven to help us do what we do.

We give our members life skills, a platform, mentoring, and open the door to theatre and the wider cultural landscape. We give their parents peace of mind that their children are safe, give their children skills and time away.

We are sustained by our funders and our audience, and in the future hope to have a more impactful partnership with our city, the media, and the business community. The skills we instil in our members are an asset to their city, and the lives they go on to lead.

We give the public and the city the opportunity to hear the youth voice of Dublin, the results of young people working together and questioning the world they live in. We challenge how Dublin sees its young people.

We give artists paid employment, and we give the arts ecosystem the next generation of audience to engage with them. We collaborate, and we feed into that ecosystem emerging talent with creative ambition.



What is your favourite thing about DYT?

Community

Experience

Learning new skills

Variety of opportunities

How much is available to members

Open and welcoming space

Meeting new people

Variety of workshops catering to everyone

Friends

You can be ridiculous

Conversation

Not pretentious

Collaboration

Input of young voices

Socialising

Queer safe space

Participants' contributions at DYT Members' Workshop

Our Strategic Ambitions

OUR PURPOSE

Dublin Youth Theatre provides a safe space for young people from a wide range of backgrounds, interests and identities, to develop artistically, socially and personally. We do this through ensemble theatre-making supported by top practitioners, that activates opportunities to grow confidence in decision making, problem solving, and teamwork.

OUR VISION

As we work towards our 50th anniversary in 2027, our vision is for DYT to be a beacon for young people in Dublin - creating a sense of place and belonging for our members, instilling a love of art, culture, and a fluency in critical thinking and creative freedom, no matter their differences.

OUR MISSION

We deliver on our vision by being adaptable to the changing world and responding to the concerns of young people, leveraging our progressive traditions, and our commitment to instilling vital skills and experiences through all aspects of theatre.

OUR PILLARS

We deliver on our purpose, vision and mission by: Connecting, Lifting up, and Producing.

We Connect via

- Schools programme
- Workshop programmes
- Membership recruitment
- Practitioners
- Youth workers and other feeder systems
- Stakeholders & Funders

We Lift Up via

- Mentoring & development
- Workshop programmes
- Best practices in work with young people
- Current concerns of youth

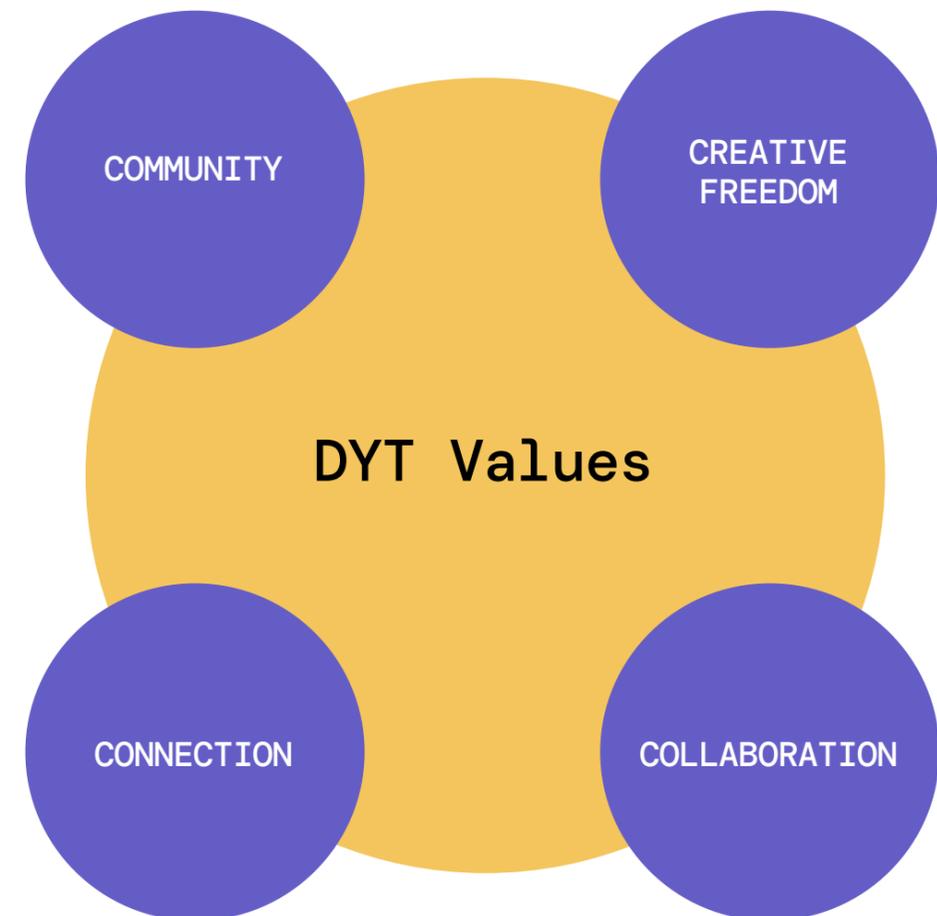
We Produce via

- Annual show
- Workshop programmes
- Showcases
- Artistic collaborations



Our Values

We are proud to deliver each of our pillars underpinned by the foundational values of creative freedom, collaboration, connection and community. These values are shared by our Executive and our Board and were sourced from the outcomes of a workshop with a selection of young people from our membership in December 2021.



Our Artistic Policy

Dublin Youth Theatre has always delivered engaging, practical artistic experiences through a wide and varied drama workshop programme and the production of excellent, exciting and challenging theatre made by young people.

We are committed to maintaining a high artistic standard in our productions and engaging with contemporary and youth theatre on a local, national and international level. We engage leading theatre artists and skilled, experienced youth theatre practitioners to deliver our core artistic programme, giving our members access to a variety of creative practices, and building lasting relationships with the wider arts community.

DYT places itself at the centre of cultural life in Dublin and our aim is to create a permanent home for an ongoing ensemble of young theatre artists; a diverse, inclusive and welcoming place where members can meet other young people from all parts of Dublin in an engaging, creative and social environment.

Underpinning our artistic policy is the ambition that DYT will foster self-expression through a love and appreciation for theatre and performing arts by engaging participants in a holistic program of activities designed to create a fully rounded experience, with members having the opportunity to gain practical experience of every aspect of theatre production.

Today's youth are tomorrow's artists, audiences and leaders, and DYT provides a foundation for their personal, artistic and creative growth.



Our Goals

We have five overarching goals for Dublin Youth Theatre in the next five years. In order to achieve these goals, there are a series of strategic and measurable objectives which we will pursue to help us on the path to our goals.

1. We will support young people in Dublin to lead creative lives and achieve their potential, no matter their economic, geographic or cultural background or identity.
2. We will provide a safe and welcoming home for young people passionate about the arts, to meet and collaborate with creative freedom.
3. We will champion and grow theatre-making for and by young people, working with artists of the highest calibre to create the audience and makers of the future.
4. We will strengthen our organisation, processes and resources to ensure our sustainability into our 50th anniversary and far beyond.
5. We will leverage our expertise in youth voice and the concerns of young people for the benefit of our city, and to strengthen DYT.

In order to be the beacon for young people in Dublin that centres a sense of place and belonging for our members, we will focus our energies in the coming period on improving our communications and stakeholder engagement to attract the resources we need to secure a home for DYT; we will continue to work with the best artists we can; and will endeavour to create new levels of accessibility in our work to drive diversity at every level, creating and delivering programmes with the communities we want to feel they belong at DYT. To follow are the objectives we will implement and evaluate on the path to our goals.



Our Strategic Objectives

GOAL 1 – SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

We will support young people in Dublin to lead creative lives and achieve their potential, no matter their economic, geographic or cultural background or identity, by:

1. Creating and implementing a clear and ambitious Membership Recruitment Plan and a more accessible Recruitment Process to ensure we reach and effectively communicate with communities of interest who aren't currently featuring. We are ambitious to further grow the diversity of our membership over time, so that our members are representative of our city and the range of identities, cultures and abilities therein.
2. Listening closely and reflecting out the issues of the day and evolving concerns of our members in our programming and work. Being agile and flexible, we can respond at speed, which is a key strength. As an example, we will work with members to devise programmes and creative projects that make DYT an effective champion of the climate movement, which impacts most acutely on young people.
3. Delivering a more ambitious programme of workshops, events and productions for DYT, that allows us to activate wider opportunities for our members and plugs our home into the city.
4. Developing our connections to Youth Workers, Schools and other support structures for young people in the city, to ensure we have advocates who will connect us to people who will thrive at DYT.

GOAL 2 – FINDING A HOME

We will provide a safe and welcoming home for young people passionate about the arts, to meet and collaborate with creative freedom, by:

5. Creating a masterplan and critical path towards the securing of a new home, through partnership with the City or other stakeholders, or purchase.
6. Mapping our network of stakeholders and friends, and resource time to develop processes ensuring we stay connected. This will include activating the latent asset that is the alumni by developing a cohort of DYT champions from past members and other stakeholders, equipped to advocate on our behalf and know where, how, and when to do so; as well as broadening our invitation lists to reflect decision-makers we need to influence, at a local and national level.
7. Beginning to develop a longer-term plan, investigating the viability of a youth-run Arts Centre, a space for learning and developing skills in programming, box office, marketing, running a social space etc, should a suitable building be identified and made available to us. This would allow DYT to be open and supportive of up and coming theatre companies, and resource emerging theatremakers in Dublin.
8. We will work with our funders and appropriate partners to ensure that whatever space we develop as our home has the capacity to be run sustainably, is flexible to meet all our needs, and with income generation potential that allows us to grow and achieve our wider aims.

GOAL 3 – STRENGTHENING OUR SECTOR

We will champion and grow theatre-making for and by young people, working with artists of the highest calibre to create the audience and makers of the future, by:

9. Broadening our cohort of artists and diversifying the panels we use to audition and work with members. We will ensure we attract the best artists, by maintaining competitive fees and ensuring projects are valuable experiences.
10. Developing and implementing a robust and deliverable Communications Plan, that helps build our brand, focuses on our messaging to different audiences and stakeholders, and has targets built in to allow us to measure the outcomes of our changed rhetoric.
11. Sharing our expertise in youth work and youth theatre through creating resources of our best practice processes, mentoring emerging makers and growing our reputation as leaders in this space in Ireland.
12. Marking our 45th anniversary and developing a plan to countdown to our 50th, including developing new stakeholder engagement relationships with potential partners such as RTÉ, future sponsors or donors, etc.

GOAL 4 – A ROBUST ORGANISATION

We will strengthen our organisation, processes and resources to ensure our sustainability into our 50th anniversary and far beyond, by:

13. Continuing to innovate in our productions and events, with a focus on audiences and fundraising opportunities. This may include hybrid presentations to ensure we continue to activate growing international audiences for our work.
14. Developing and modelling a staffing structure suitable to deliver the needs of our growing organisation, along with a funding model that sustains us through income diversification and effective fundraising.
15. Ensuring a shared understanding of and focus on sustainability, accessibility and inclusion in every part of the organisation – our people, our processes, our programme and our premises.
16. Developing clear job descriptions for Board member and Chair functions, which includes governance guidance, to ensure clear demarcation between Board and Executive functions. The Board will audit its work annually, to ensure progress in the implementation of this Strategic Plan.
17. Updating all policies and ensuring governance is robust and exceeds the needs of the Charities Regulator. This will include reporting on the diversity of our executive, board, members, and staff cohort.

Implementation

GOAL 5 - PARTNERS IN OUR CITY

We will leverage our expertise in youth voice and the concerns of young people for the benefit of our city, and to strengthen DYT, by:

18. As part of our more active engagement with issues, ensuring we feed in where possible and appropriate to conversations that support the development of policy in areas relevant to DYT.
19. Youth theatre is of unconditional value to the city, and at DYT we build social inclusion, and can develop creative responses to challenges. We will develop key messages in this area and advocate with the City to involve DYT more in opportunities to animate the city.
20. Creating programming at strategically opportune times such as for Culture Night, using the members to make DYT more visible and important in the city.

We believe the ambitions of this Strategic Plan are achievable and timely.

Each year, working with the Board, we will create a yearly plan identifying which projects will be developed in that year, putting specific and measurable targets against each, to be reported on at the end of the year.

This will ensure we keep on track and make progress.

A sub-committee of the Board, supplemented with external expertise, will drive the progress towards securing DYT's new home.



CREDITS

This strategy was developed with funding from The Arts Council's Capacity Building Grant Scheme, and facilitated by Rowena Neville of Blue Line Consulting Ltd.

BOARD MEMBERS

Abigail Cepeda (Members' Representative), Luka Costello, Jack Gilligan, MP Guinness (Secretary), Linda Hartsema (Treasurer), Ailbhe McCaughey (Members' Representative), Deirdre Molloy (Chair), Roxanna Nic Liam, Cormac O'Brien (Vice-Chair), Dan Pender

DYT TEAM

Sarah Bragg-Bolger - Managing Director
Davey Kelleher - Artistic Director
Dave Kelly - Artistic Director 2013-2021
Phoebe Moore - Programme Co-ordinator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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