

ECHO ECHO DANCE THEATRE COMPANY
REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Echo Echo marked the tenth anniversary of moving into its beautiful home studios in Waterloo House during spring 2023 however the 2023/24 financial year remained challenging for many arts organisations in Northern Ireland.

Grant income was down on previous years and nearly all core and project costs continued to increase. Total earned income was maintained at around similar level to previous year across a range of different services provided. Echo Echo re-engaged with its core audiences and worked towards rebuilding its different programmes of production, performance and participation after the challenges of the lockdown years and the ongoing cost of living crisis

Standstill grant income of £112k was secured through the ACNI Annual Funding Programme and a welcome additional award of £18k was provided at end of financial year via the ACNI AFP uplift scheme. Continued core funding from Derry City and Strabane District Council was a vital support. A single-year core grant of £20k from the Garfield Weston Foundation helped to safeguard the company during this period of rapidly increasing costs.

Echo Echo Festival secured increased grant funding from the Irish government Co-operation with Northern Ireland Funding Scheme (£14k) towards the second edition of its Tradition and Beyond programme of dance, movement and music events inspired by the Irish Tradition. This programme was a partnership between Echo Echo, Cultúrlann Uí Chanáin (Derry), University of Limerick, Siamsa Tíre (Kerry) and Leitrim Dance Project. This is the sixth time Echo Echo Festival has been supported by this cross-border scheme and the largest grant award received from the fund to date.

Major Echo Echo Festival commission from 2021 - Amid the Noise and the Haste by Colin Norrby and Echo Echo - was awarded the prize for Best Original Soundtrack at the prestigious Light Moves Film Festival 2023. Colin has been commissioned to create a new score for the Echo Echo - PETEC (Romania) international co-production in 2024.

Echo Echo Ensemble - Ayesha Mailey, Kelly Quigley, Zoe Ramsey and Tonya Sheina - along with Technical Manager Barry Davis produced two original works with small budgets supported principally by voluntary time, box office income as well as small grant contributions from Derry Strabane Council and the Enkalon Foundation - The Experiment in October 2023 and Winter's Dream in December 2023. Both productions were well attended and extremely well received by audiences. Sourcing funding for new work continues to be a major challenge for the company with only one research and development grant and no production grants in the last ten years despite extensive efforts.

Other performance projects during 2023/24 included:

- * Echo Echo Triple Bill featuring The World (into which I was born) by Steve Batts, Swing Lightly by Tonya Sheina and Zoe Ramsey and Move It by Zoe Ramsey & Echo Echo Ensemble
- * Steve Batts performing solo work at Dancer from the Dance Festival of Irish Choreography, Dublin
- * A BOX - performances of this original work by Zoe Ramsey and Tonya Sheina at Roe Valley Arts and Echo Echo Studios in summer 2023
- * Show n Tale Sessions was a new interactive storytelling performance project by Gemma Walker-Farren (MakeyUppers) and Tonya Sheina (Echo Echo)
- * Wall Dances - a new outdoor video installation for Culture Night 2023 by Barry Davis and Echo Echo Ensemble
- * GHOSTS - by Gemma Walker-Farren & Echo Echo - toured in Ireland as part of the First Fortnight Festival in January 2024
- * Four & Fioriture presented in February 2024 are two new works for dancers and immersive audio, created collaboratively by Peter O'Doherty with Echo Echo Ensemble and Steve Batts

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Echo Echo continued to work in partnership with a broad variety of artistic partners including major outdoor performances with LUXE, festivals including NI Mental Health Arts Festival, Dancer from the Dance Festival (Dublin) and First Fortnight, and music partners including Celtronic, Northern Lights Project and Music Capital who each presented some spellbinding concerts at Echo Echo Studios.

Echo Echo Gallery supported the work of over 50 artists in 2023/24 under the curatorship of Sinéad Smyth, including Blow In - a solo exhibition by Fiona Rainey; The Edges of This Place by Sinéad Smyth; Derry Print Workshop artists Paul Barwise, Cara Donaghy and Stephanie Gaumont; and the second A5 Winter International exhibition. New cross-border and cross-artform partnerships with visual arts organisations and artists were created including collaborations with Artlink, Inishowen Artists' Retreat, Donegal Visual Arts Network and North West Regional College throughout the year. Barry Davis' Night Lights major outdoor light installation at Waterloo Street for DCSDC continued throughout the year.

Echo Echo Studios hire income was a valuable source of unrestricted income and the Studios retained hire rates at very reasonable levels and ensured a high level of service to all hirers. Feedback from a very broad range of arts and community hirers has been unanimously positive.

The company supported a wide range of artists across different artforms with free and low-cost space, equipment and technical support through its Residency Programme and Associate Artist Programme - strengthening artist networks and partnerships and contributing to local cultural development.

The Associate Artist programme has grown to four associates - Sinéad Smyth, Gemma Walker-Farren, Karen Torley and Laurie Schneider - each working with the company in different ways, developing their own practice and collaborating with the company on specific projects.

EEDTC continued to demonstrate its commitment to accessibility by engaging with the DCSDC Access and Inclusion Project where opportunities arose during 2023/24 - including ISL/BSL training, Deaf Awareness Training and Disability Awareness Training for staff and ensemble artists. Further to an Independent access audit, further access improvements were made to Echo Echo Studios. Three new Social Narrative accessible videos were produced for the venue and are hosted on the company website - thanks to Council and to the University of Atypical for their support with these.

EEDTC commenced a sixth Body Wisdom in the Community programme facilitated by Echo Echo Ensemble artists along with musicians Mark O'Doherty and Amanda Koser-Gillespie. Supported by the ACNI Arts and Older People Programme, The Baring Foundation and the National Lottery, this project provided dance and movement workshops in local care settings including Deanfield, Eglinton, William Street and Praxis Care. Weekly Body Wisdom sessions with Kelly Quigley have gone from strength to strength with continued commitment of the core group and new members joining.

The company produced a Good Relations project supported by DCSDC and TBUC in two Newbuildings primary schools leading to a closing performance at Echo Echo Studios; and Echo Echo's REAP programme supported by ACNI Lottery funding engaged over 300 audience and participation in Eglinton, Plumbridge, Slon Mills and throughout the Derry Strabane Council area

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Echo Echo Studios supported a variety of arts and community activities that contributed to the creative development and health and wellbeing of local citizens in 2023/24 including, to name but a few of many dozens of examples:

- * Echo Echo Kids Classes on Saturdays with Ayesha Mailey and Tonya Sheina
- * Weekly Adult Dance sessions with Zoe Ramsey
- * Body Wisdom weekly classes with Kelly Quigley for older adults
- * Echo Echo Summer Scheme intensive weeks of dance, movement, arts and crafts
- * Foyle Down Syndrome Association sessions with Tonya Sheina
- * First Act Youth Theatre weekly classes and performances with Mary Fitzpatrick
- * Singing Mamas sessions with Music Kin
- * Baby Yoga and Reflexology sessions with The Women's Centre
- * In Your Space Circus Acro classes for kids and adults
- * Nourish Winter Sessions with Lihi Shivak
- * Circle Dance courses led by Jean Parker
- * Yoga with Chloe
- * Yoga with Megan
- * Northwest Aikido Circle

Echo Echo has been developing a strategic partnership with An Grianán Theatre, Letterkenny with a view to new creative projects, new work development and cross-border funding bids; and continued to work with the Atlantic Technological University in Sligo.

International projects during the year included: Steve Batts teaching at Italy Contact Improvisation Festival and at Bodymeld Festival Bulgaria; development of a major international co-production with PETEC due commence in April 2024; as well as international artist residencies at Echo Echo Studios.

Echo Echo Artistic Director, Steve Batts, continued to play an active role on the DCSDC Arts and Strategy Co-Delivery Group during 2023/24 and engaged in a wide range of strategic sectoral meetings. Echo Echo worked with Thrive audience development agency on the NW Audience Survey and DCSDC Audience Development Strategy.

Thanks to all of the people and organisations who made Echo Echo's work possible in 2023/24 - our audiences and participants, the Echo Echo Ensemble, the core staff team, our volunteers, our circles of associate and resident artists and musicians, the Echo Echo Board of Directors and all of our funders and project partners.

Finally, special mentions and thanks to outgoing director Cath McBride who stepped down from the Echo Echo Board after supporting and advising the company so generously over the last ten years, and to outgoing Echo Echo Development Officer Anna Nolan who moved on from the company in October 2023 after more than 11 years in post - thanks for all of your support and we wish you all the best for the future!

Ailbe Beirne
Company Secretary

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Statement of Financial Activities on page 13 details the results for the year. Overall, the Company had a net movement out of funds in the sum of £6,082. This is made up of net movement in of unrestricted funds of £17,339 and a net movement out of restricted funds of £23,421. The net movements in of unrestricted funds for the year of £17,339 has been added to the unrestricted balances brought forward from 1 April 2023 of £50,669 giving a net unrestricted balance carried forward at 31 March 2024 of £68,008. The net movements out of restricted funds for the year of £23,421 has deducted from the funds balance brought forward at 1 April 2023 of £25,051, giving a net restricted fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2024 of £1,630.

GOING CONCERN

The company has developed a new five year Strategic Plan for 2023-28. This provides a plan as to how the company will adapt and survive over the next few years. Due to the nature and funding of the company, costs can quickly be reduced if income is reduced. Due to the reserves and forecast budgets the management committee believe that this provides sufficient confidence that the company is a going concern and the accounts have been prepared on that basis.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The committee has assessed the major risks to which the Company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the Company, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate the exposure to major risks.

Echo Echo has a business plan in place for 2023-28 and will build on the outstanding successes of the previous corporate planning period which saw the realisation of most key strategic objectives. The company aims to remain artist led and to retain core staff while establishing the centre in increasingly challenging economic circumstances.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

The organisation is a company Limited by Guarantee not having a share capital, incorporated on 23 April 1998 and is registered with the NI Charity Commission.

Appointment of Management Committee

There are currently 5 directors on the Management Committee.

Management Committee Induction and Training

New directors undergo an orientation day to brief them on : their legal obligations under charity and company law, the charity commission guidance on public benefit, and inform them of the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and the decision-making process, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. During the induction day they meet key employees and other members. Members are encouraged to attend appropriate external events where these will facilitate the undertaking of the role.

Organisation

The Management Committee administers the Charity. To facilitate effective operations, Stephen Batts as Artistic Director and Ailbe Beirne as Company Manager jointly have delegated authority from the Management Committee for operational matters including finance and management and general day to day operations of the organisation.

Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

None of the Directors receives remuneration or other benefits from their work with the Charity. Any connection between a director or senior member of the charity with a contracted supplier must be disclosed to the full Management Committee in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year no such related party transactions were reported.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

The name of the Charity is Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company. It is a company Limited by Guarantee not having a share capital. The Company was incorporated on 23 April 1998 and has charitable status.

DIRECTORS

The company is limited by guarantee and therefore there were no directors' interest in share capital.

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON

Deirdre Gillespie

SECRETARY

Ailbe Beirne

TREASURER

Catherine Mc Bride (Resigned 06/03/2024)
Francis Rafferty (Appointed 27/04/2023)

OTHER DIRECTORS

Deirdre Gillespie
Gail Mahon
Concettina McCauley
Ciara Bradley (Appointed 27/04/2023)
Esther Alleyne (Resigned 28/08/2023)

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Steve Batts

REGISTERED OFFICE

Waterloo House
Magazine Street
Derry, BT48 6HH

BANKERS

Bank of Ireland
Strand Road
Derry BT48 7BT

AUDITORS

E F McCambridge & Co
6 Bayview Terrace
Derry BT48 7EE

COMPANY NUMBER

NI 34042

LEGAL STATUS

Company Limited By Guarantee

CHARITY NUMBER

XR 23797

CHARITY COMMISSION NI NUMBER

NIC 100069

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

The Management Committee (who are also directors of Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Management Committees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Management Committee to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Management Committee are required to:

- * select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- * observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- * make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- * state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- * prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation

The Management Committee are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Management Committee are aware:

- * there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- * the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

AUDITORS

A resolution proposing that E F McCambridge & Co. be re-appointed as Auditors of the Company will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

SMALL COMPANY PROVISIONS

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

Approved by the Management Committee on 19 December 2024 and signed on their behalf by :

DIRECTOR:

Deirdre B Gillespie
DEIRDRE GILLESPIE