



**Blue  
Teapot**

**Theatre Company**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**



# CONTENTS

3 CHAIRPERSON’S NOTE

---

4 YEAR IN NUMBERS

---

5 THEATRE COMPANY

---

6 OSKA BRIGHT

---

7 THE MYTH OF ECHO & NARCISSUS

---

10 FAIRY TREE

---

17 PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOL

---

18 NEW STUDENTS & STUDENT FILM

---

20 MURDER IN THE BEEHIVE

---

23 GRADUATES

---

24 COMMUNITY THEATRE PROGRAMME

---

25 SPARKLE – AN EPIC JOURNEY

---

27 BRIGHT SOUL

---

28 WORKABILITY

---

29 COMPANY BUSINESS

---

30 GOVERNANCE

---

31 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

---

32 MAYORS BALL

---

33 FUNDERS & DONORS

---

35 ADVOCACY – NDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

---

36 STRATEGIC ARTS PLAN

---

42 2024 COMPANY

---

43 2024 FUNDERS LOGOS

---

44 IMAGES & CREDITS

---





## CHAIRPERSON'S NOTE

It is with great pride and gratitude that I reflect on another extraordinary year for Blue Teapot Theatre Company. 2024 was a year marked by artistic excellence, growth and meaningful progress. Our actors and students continue to inspire with their talent, commitment and courage. Highlights of the year included the fabulous production of *Fairy Tree* along with inclusive workshops for children in schools across the city and county, collaboration with Theatre Lovett and launch of the Workability Programme to build inclusive pathways to employment for our actors and students.

I extend heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff and tutors who work tirelessly behind the scenes to support the artistic vision and day-to-day operations, and to my fellow Board members, whose governance and strategic oversight uphold our mission and values. We are informed by *Owning the Space* our Strategic Arts Plan (2023-2027) and we continue to embed the principles of the Charities Governance Code into all aspects of our work, strengthening our transparency, accountability and leadership.

To our funders, partners and supporters - *thank you*. Your belief in our work empowers us to dream boldly and achieve more. I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of Brothers of Charity Services Ireland – West Region, Ability West, The Arts Council, GRETB, Galway City and County Councils, The Ireland Fund and Pobal along with our Friends and volunteers.

We look forward with anticipation and confidence to an exciting 2025.

**FIONA COFFEY**

**YEAR  
IN NUMBERS**

88

theatre professionals engaged

3

new show commissions

1

BAFTA qualifying nomination

75%

increase in new audiences

1

new co-production

23

arts educators & practitioners engaged

5

students made their stage debut

100%

QQI modules passed

16

students started WorkAbility

220%

increase of new website users

3

times increase in grants

3

new staff roles

3

new corporate friends

2

new board members

27 of 180

mortgage payments made



# Theatre Company

A professional ensemble of actors who work to radically transform theatre practices by telling stories through the lens of disability.

We are committed to ensuring that the contribution our artists make to Ireland's cultural life is recognised, valued and understood.

Blue Teapot Ensemble 2024: Patrick Becker, Paul Connolly, Kieran Coppinger, Jenny Cox, Cormac Crawford, Valerie Egan, Michael Hayes, Charlene Kelly, Emer Macken, Grace O'Brien, Cathal Scott Reynolds, Roisin Walsh.





## REEL FUN at OSKA BRIGHT FILM FESTIVAL BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

We had the honour of representing Ireland at the BAFTA and BIFA qualifying Oska Brighton Film Festival (UK), screening three self-produced films on Sunday 17th March, as part of the documentary strand REEL IRELAND.

Oska Bright is the world's leading festival for films made by or featuring people with intellectual disabilities or autism. Annually held in Brighton, the event screens over 100 films. Our 2023 documentary *Enquire Within* was chosen to close the week-long festival and was nominated in the Best Story Of A Life award category.

Filmed in Clifden, *Enquire Within* involved community participants in front and behind the camera, learning film-making skills, exploring the critical subject of un/employment and real-life experiences of young people & those with disabilities.

Speaking about his experience as Assistant Director, Paul Connolly said “ I appreciate the nomination for *Enquire Within*. Thank you, it's such a great honour to represent Blue Teapot and the Clifden communities involved in our documentary at Oska Bright Film Festival this year”.

We also screened two other documentaries – *Prophecy* (2021) and *My Light Will Blind You* (2022). All three documentaries were directed by award winning independent film maker Fionn Rogers with direct involvement of our ensemble artists and collaborators.

The opportunity to attend Oska Bright Film Festival was made possible by funding from Culture Ireland who awarded €2,000 towards our visit.



# THE MYTH OF ECHO & NARCISSUS

A Work In Progress Presentation

Written by Nico Brown

Directed by Muireann Ahern

Choreographed by Kévin Coquelard



THEATRE  
LOVETT



*The setting is Mount Olympus, seat of the ancient Greek Gods, as they bear witness to a terrible tragedy unfolding for humankind.*

In April, we enjoyed our third encounter with Theatre Lovett, one of Ireland's most critically acclaimed, most imaginative and indispensable theatre companies at work today.

Two previous encounters in 2023 were week-long explorations between Theatre Lovett's co- Artistic Directors Muireann Ahern and Louis Lovett and our ensemble.

While it is not always guaranteed that artistic chemistry will occur, happily it did and we collectively worked towards public presentations of the work in progress to invited guests.

The aim is to co-produce a future full production of Echo & Narcissus.

The work in progress presentation was made possible by support from The Arts Council and Galway City Council Arts Office.









# fairy tree





# Cast and Crew



## Fairy Tree Cast

Ruthgar.....	Paul Connolly
Mr Mayor.....	Kieran Coppinger
Jess.....	Jenny Cox
Mrs Mayor.....	Valerie Egan
Cyril.....	Rod Goodall
King of the Fairies.....	Michael Hayes
Rachel.....	Grace O'Brien
Rosie.....	Cathal Scott Reynolds

## Fairy Tree Creatives & Crew

Writer & Director.....	Rod Goodall
Costume & Puppet Design.....	Charmian Goodall
Music & Songs composed by.....	Stephen Johnston
Sound Design.....	Jason Scott
Lighting Design.....	Órla Kelly-Smith & Jim Faulkner
Tree Design.....	Tommy Casby & Rod Goodall

Production Manager.....	Niall Barrett
Stage Manager.....	Orla Kelly-Smith
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Barry Ryan
Sound & Lighting Operator.....	Jason Scott
Tree make.....	Tommy Casby
Costumes & Puppets make.....	Charmian Goodall
Props.....	Barry Ryan, Orla Kelly-Smith, Rod Goodall & Jason Scott

Chief LX & Programmer.....	Shannon Light
Stage Technician.....	Rory O'Regan

Accessibility Consultant.....	Mo Harte
Sensory Tours.....	Mo Harte & Dave Donovan
Easy to Read Programme.....	Ace Communications

PR & Marketing.....	Jane Hanberry Lisa Regan Sonja Brodie
---------------------	---

Graphic Design.....	Clair O'Brien
---------------------	---------------

Box Office Manager.....	Jane Hanberry
-------------------------	---------------

Photography.....	Andrew Downes Anita Murphy Emilija Jafremova Jason Scott Midie Corcoran Hillary Kavanagh
------------------	---

Front of House.....	Judith Wolf Ana Alvarez Dave Donovan James Flanagan Grace Hannon Maria Hannon Caoimhe McMahon Andrew Quinn James Wallace Jack Walsh
---------------------	--

Pre & Post Engagement Materials.....	Dr. Hoidi Schoenenberger
--------------------------------------	--------------------------

Evaluation.....	Philip Isard & Caroline Gardner, Quality Matters
-----------------	---

Evaluation Gathering.....	Petal Pilley, James Flanagan, Rebecca Malone, Midie Corcoran & Jane Parsons
---------------------------	---

Project Co-ordinator.....	Rebecca Malone
---------------------------	----------------

Producer.....	Hillary Kavanagh
---------------	------------------



## FAIRY TREE

*"I cannot wait for kids to see us in their schools and in our theatre".*

Fairy Tree is a multi-phase initiative combining theatre and inclusive workshops led by our professional actors, to schools across Galway City and County. Taking place from September – December, it is an interdependent project that fosters creativity and collaboration between our actors and children with/without disabilities and those who are neurodivergent.

The impetus for Fairy Tree project came initially from conversations with the actors to inform our new Strategic Arts Plan and capture their artistic ambitions. Several expressed they wanted to create theatre for children with one actor saying that he'd never seen anyone like him on stage as a child.

A short story written by Rod Goodall, about the presence of the fairy realm in our everyday lives, was the spark for a new piece of children's theatre. With the seeds sown, a new play was commissioned, and with it, development of companion workshops to be delivered by our actors to schoolchildren with/without disabilities and those who are neurodivergent.





## INCLUSIVE THEATRE WORKSHOPS

*Fairy Tree* is about giving children the rare experience of being led by actors with intellectual disabilities through an inclusive theatre workshop combined with then seeing them perform in a high quality children's theatre production. The message is clear – artistic and professional achievement is possible for all.





## REMOVING BARRIERS

We strive to improve the theatre going experience for audiences, removing barriers for people to access our work. Although Blue Teapot Theatre capacity is small compared to most venues in Galway, it is wheelchair accessible. As part of the public shows, we offered two free **Sensory Tours** facilitated by Mo Harte and supported by Dave Donovan.

The Sensory Tours are a tactile exploration of the geography of a theatre space, stage, props, costumes and furniture. The tours can be very beneficial to theatre patrons who are blind, visually impaired, on the autistic spectrum, non-verbal or have intellectual difficulties and for those who process differently.

## FAIRY TREE - THEATRE PRODUCTION

Rehearsals for new children's play *Fairy Tree* took place from September 2024. Devised, written and directed by Rod Goodall, *Fairy Tree* is our first time creating and producing theatre specifically for children (aged from 6 years).

Featuring seven of our ensemble actors, along with Rod Goodall, *Fairy Tree* is a humorous, charming and colourful play incorporating puppetry, music and song. A perfect winter's tale, *Fairy Tree* tells a story of fairies so cold they are frozen to a Fir Tree. Two girls notice them and ask the community to take the fairies into their houses to warm up. Not everyone is pleased but it is agreed, as long as the fairies do not overstay their welcome. Will the fairies stick to the agreement?

**Rod Goodall** was inspired by "the importance of our relationship with each other, nature and perhaps the fairy world. This is a celebration and acceptance that we are all different. The show explores the tradition of bringing a Fir Tree into our homes at mid-winter but only for twelve days. Why is that?"

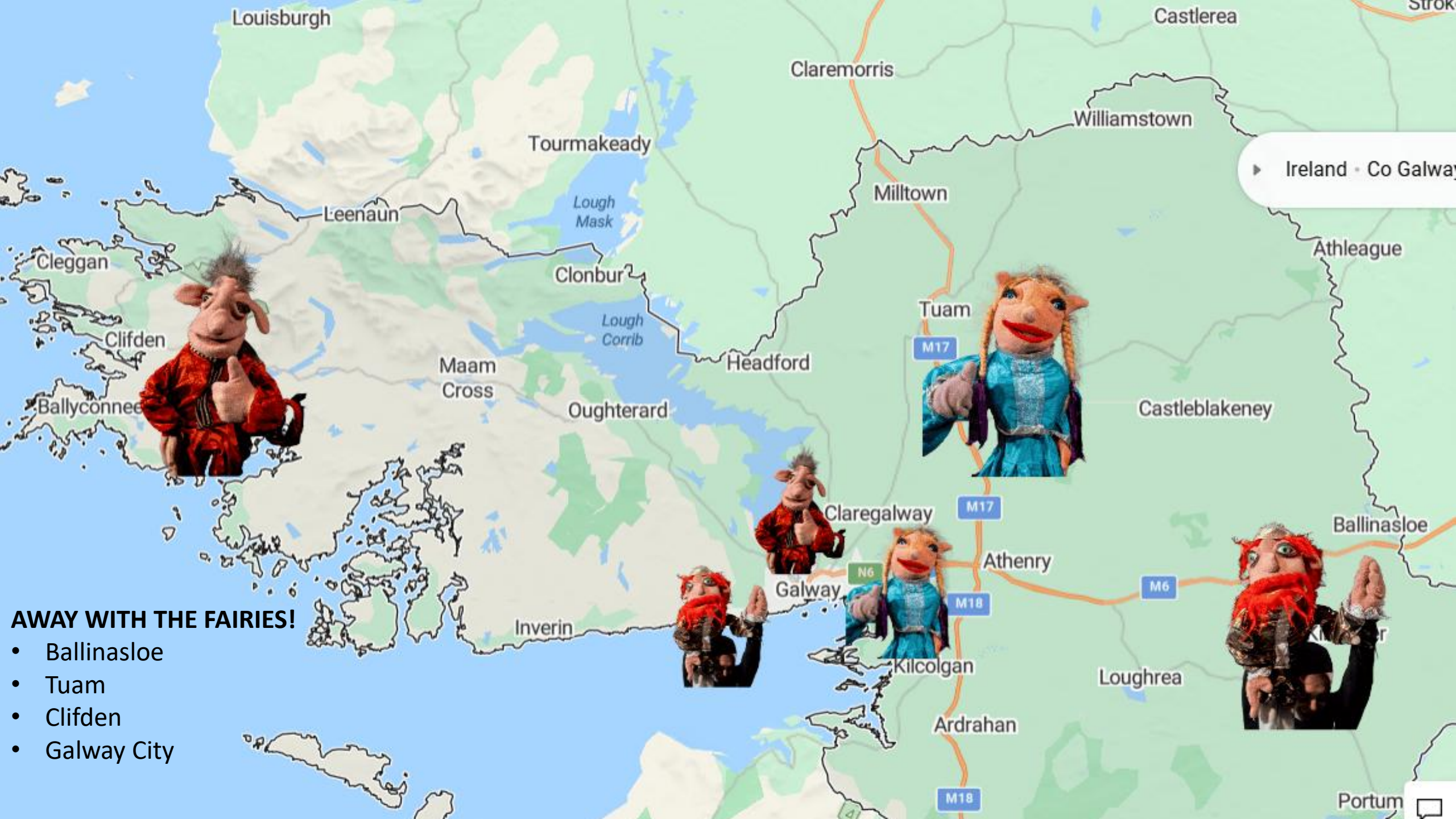
### WHAT THE CAST SAY ABOUT FAIRY TREE

"I love playing my character, the Mayor. He is a great role to have; he's distinguished and commands respect. It's also a lot of fun and I'm looking forward to children seeing the show" **Kieran Coppinger**

"It's an honour to part of this ensemble and cast in the show. I've wanted this for a very long time. I play an important role as a puppeteer. My character Rosie is a fairy, she's the cheeky one, bit like me!" - **Cathal Scott Reynolds**

"I love being an actor in the theatre, just the atmosphere and being part of a spectacular show"- **Jenny Cox**





Ireland - Co Galway

# AWAY WITH THE FAIRIES!

- Ballinasloe
- Tuam
- Clifden
- Galway City



*“If you can’t see it, you can’t be it’ is a quote we refer to in education and our pupils with intellectual disabilities have never experienced a class or workshop being facilitated by adults with any intellectual disability. It will be a very powerful experience for them to be taught by adults they identify with. It is a simple thing but it will have an amazing effect on both students and staff. An equally important part of Blue Teapot’s proposition is that our students will then get to see the workshop leaders put their skill into action performing in Fairy Tree. We can only imagine the impact that this will have on our students” – Teacher, Galway City*

*“By seeing adults with intellectual disabilities deliver the programme workshop and then perform in their professional capacity as actors, these children will be inspired and encouraged to explore their own potential as creative and inspirational individuals.”*  
Principal, County Galway

## FAIRY TREE ON THE ROAD

Despite some very inclement weather, in November we brought *Fairy Tree* to the very audiences for whom this project was aimed. National School pupils in Scoil an Chroí Naofa, Ballinasloe, St. Oliver’s & Tuam ETNS and Scoil Mhuire, Clifden were treated to the unique experience of participating in inclusive theatre workshops led by our actors.

### Pre and Post Engagement Material

We engaged Dr. Heidi Schoenenberger, who specialises in engaging children and their caregivers in the performing arts, to create and write a pre and post engagement package for schools which contained a selection of wonderful classroom activities that teachers could explore with the children before and after the show.

### BABORÓ INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN

In October, we were involved in two events as part of Baboró’s festival. Prior to the County tour, we partnered with three Galway City schools Scoil Nicoláis Naofa Claddagh, Scoil Iognáid and Scoil Bhríde, Shantalla, proving inclusive theatre workshops on three consecutive days.

We also participated in a panel discussion **Space for All: Making Time for Inclusive Arts Practice** on 14 October at The Mick Lally Theatre. Actor Kieran Coppinger and Artistic Director Petal Pilley got to share their experiences of what it means to be inclusive in arts practise. While there are increasingly more positive steps towards inclusivity in cultural sectors, many challenges and obstacles remain in development, presentation and especially touring opportunities.





# Performing Arts School

An accredited provider of vocational training for people aged 18 and over with intellectual disabilities. Founded in 2010, it was specifically set up to address the needs of those learners who want to gain formal training and certification in QQI creative modules.

Our ethos is to give students quality arts experience of equal importance to required learning outcomes. Tutors are subject matter experts with a wealth of knowledge in creative arts – theatre directors, actors, artists, musicians and designers – along with specialists in advocacy and life skills.



# Welcome our New Students

## FÁILTE ROIMH CLASS OF 2024



Each September we enroll a new intake of students in to our Performing Arts School. We were delighted to welcome Aidan, Anna, Holly, Elva, Lauren and Ciarán in to the first of three years.

For some of the students, a progression route in to the School comes via participation in our Community Theatre Programme, as is the case with Elva (Bright Soul) and Lauren (an original Sparkle!).

All six students start their training with *Introduction to Performing Arts*, a QQI Level 2 General Learning Major Award programme. They will also enjoy visits to Galway's cultural amenities and attend live theatre, galleries and arts events.

*For the each September's enrolment, there is year round open application (usual deadlines for submission end of January, prior to auditions in February).*

### Second and Third Years

In addition to QQI Level 3 programme, second and third year students have a range of job readiness classes as part of *WorkAbility: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme*. Life Skills modules and performance based classes take place including the creation of a short film project.

**'A Blue Nun's Island!'** - Characters and storylines were born from the imagination of second and third students, working with director Michael Patrick Breen. The comedic short film told an intriguing story of a kidnapped opera singer and crime to solve and was shot in various locations in Galway.







## MURDER IN THE BEEHIVE

**Written & directed by Rod Goodall**

On 27 May, second and third year students were buzzing to present '***Murder in the Beehive***' to an invited audience of family and friends.

Started in September 2023, the students collectively expressed their desire to present a murder mystery for their end of course performance.

Taking on the challenge was tutor Rod Goodall, who wished to highlight the plight of bees experiencing an infestation of mites, who devised and directed the short one-act play.

Together, the cast of ten worked over 20 weeks, 50 hours, equivalent to just 10 days to put on a show.

As always, high production values and a creative team of professional artists gave every performer the chance to shine.

First year students were hands-on with their first 'Blue Teapot live' as the Front of House team welcoming guests to the theatre.





## MURDER IN THE BEEHIVE

### CAST

Queen Bee  
Virgin Queen  
Drones

Roksana Kazmierska  
Grace Hannon  
Robert Comber  
Andrew Quinn  
James Wallace

Worker Bee &  
Varoa Puppet  
Worker Bee, Wasp  
& Varoa Puppet  
Worker Bee & Wasp  
Worker Bee &  
Varoa Puppet  
Worker Bee & Professor

Mary Grace Best Lydon  
  
Francis Carr  
Maria Hannon  
  
Caoimhe McMahon  
Jack Walsh

### CREATIVE TEAM

Writer/Director  
Costume Designer  
Light /Sound Operator  
Props  
Stage Managers

Rod Goodall  
Charmian Goodall  
Michael Patrick Breen  
Dave Donovan  
Dave Donovan  
Marta Rodriguez





## Congratulations – The Class of 2024



Francis Carr



Roksana Kazmierska



Robert Comer



Mary Grace Best Lydon



Aidan Thomas



# Community Theatre Programme

Community Theatre Programme has two distinct strands: **BRIGHT SOUL** caters for adults 18+ years and **SPARKLE** caters for youth 12 – 17 years who are curious about performance.

Participants enjoy fun, theatre workshops with spring and autumn terms of approximately ten weeks each. Both projects can be a pathway into the more formal training environment of the Performing Arts School.





## AN EPIC JOURNEY Sparkle

**SPARKLE** is the first point of contact a young person aspiring to perform can make with Blue Teapot. It is specifically designed for teenagers to encourage them to develop their creativity, performance and social skills. In February, SPARKLE commenced the spring term with the focus and goal of creating a showcase of work.

Over several Saturday mornings, Co- Directors Lali Morris and Rebecca Malone worked with the twelve teenage participants, encouraging imagination, developing storylines and characters with contributions from the Sparkles, while also having lots of fun.

**An Epic Journey** is the story centred on a group of friends on a rescue mission to save a princess from an evil monster.

The teenagers wowed their audience with a truly beautiful performance, incorporating physical theatre, improvisation and dance.

The short play was supported by high production values in costume, sound and light design and stage management.







## BRIGHT SOUL

Caters to a variety of ages, with some long-standing members being joined by newer participants in 2024 some of whom had a pathway from our other Community Theatre Programme **Sparkle**.

Spring & autumn terms last for 10 weeks per term, facilitated by drama tutors Rebecca Malone (spring term), Sinead Hackett (autumn) & supported by staff and volunteers.

### Performance Skills Development

This group has committed to their Monday evenings with some participants travelling from Co. Clare and West Meath. The autumn focus was on working collaboratively as a team to brainstorm narratives to be developed into short improvised scenes.

These processes exercise the muscles of imagination and cooperation, two vital building blocks in theatre creation.

In Spring 2025, Bright Soul will work on the creation of their mini-theatre production to be performed in June.



## WORKABILITY

2024 was the start of a new five-year programme, *WorkAbility: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme*. WorkAbility is co-funded by the EU Employment, Inclusion, Skills, and Training Programme 2021-2027 and Department of Social Protection.

WorkAbility aims to support people with disabilities aged from sixteen to become job ready, gain work experience and access to employment/self-employment.

Our programme will support the actors by ensuring they have the knowledge and materials on a par with other professional actors in the sector. This will include getting new professional headshots, show reels and experience of working with theatre production companies.

Performing Arts School's third year students will be provided with Life Skills classes, CV development, job ready workshops, along with job shadowing and work experience opportunities. Arts organisations will collaborate with us to provide access audits and staff training facilitated by the actors and students.

The funding has enabled us to create employment for three new positions in our company – Workability Project Manager (James Flanagan), Workability Lead Coach (Rebecca Malone) and Performing Arts School Workability Coach (Ana Alvarez).



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Ana chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
Co-funded by the  
European Union



This project is co-funded by the Government of Ireland, through the Department of Social Protection, and the European Union.





# COMPANY BUSINESS

We understand the need for transparency when it comes to stakeholders and funders, to reassure public confidence about the way in which their money is managed and where money will be spent.

Our Board ensures that Blue Teapot is properly managed and remains solvent. Financial Statement of accounts are independently audited and filed with the Companies Registration Office and submitted to The Charities Regulator.



# GOVERNANCE

**CRO: 471758**

**CRN 20071912 / CHY 18643**

**REVENUE: 9709656J**

At the AGM held Wednesday 26th June 2024, serving Directors Mary Seale O'Flaherty and James. C. Harrold resigned, and were reinstated. In October, Directors voted to appoint two new Directors to the Board, Orla Haddigan and Mary Foyle, both of whom work within disability services. Serving Directors numbered nine on the Board with additional seven members of the company.

In 2020, we completed the mandatory Charities Governance Code for the Charities Regulator with the only change being the dissolving of the Fundraising sub-committee. Fundraising is the on-going concern for the whole Board.

The company maintained a core staff team of nine part-time employees, one employee (Artistic Director) seconded from Brothers of Charity Services Ireland- West Region and supported by four part-time community work placement scheme workers and project based volunteers.



# 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a white piggy bank. The piggy bank is a simple, stylized design with a large snout, small ears, and a single eye. The hand is positioned at the bottom left, with fingers gently gripping the piggy bank. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a red and white striped fabric.

## PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY & REVIEW OF BUSINESS

The main objective for which the company is established is to benefit and advance education and participation in the arts in the county of Galway as defined in the Arts Acts 1951, 1973, and 2003.

We do this through the operation of a Theatre Company and performing arts education to promote inclusion, social development and the artistic expression of people with intellectual disabilities.

2024 turnover was €872,507 reflecting:

- Increased artistic outputs including Arts Council Arts Grant of €100K for Fairy Tree project.
- Year one (of five years) funding €82,201 for WorkAbility.
- Year two (of five) grant by a philanthropic Trust.

Strategic growth for Performing Arts School continued with annual intake of new students each September.

As outlined next, we were blessed to benefit from once off grant awards and external fundraisers that contributed to earned income and exceeding fundraising targets.

We publish a full set, audited Financial Statement along with this Annual Report on our website - [blueteapot.ie/governance](https://blueteapot.ie/governance)



26<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Actor Kieran Coppinger meeting with **An Taoiseach** Simon Harris at a glamorous Black Tie Event hosted by Mayor of Galway - Cllr Eddie Hoare who kindly nominated Blue Teapot as one of the charity beneficiaries.





## FUNDERS & DONORS

Gratitude goes to all funders & individual donors who enabled our service provision throughout 2024, in particular major funding partners **Brothers of Charity Services Ireland – West Region, Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board, Ability West, WorkAbility: Inclusive Pathways to Employment Programme** and a philanthropic Trust.

### **Galway City Council - arts grant, capacity building & access supports.**

- The Arts Office contributed €5,000 towards theatre development.
- Local Community Development Committee contributed €1,500 for new media accessories and equipment.
- Social Fund contributed to purchases of disability access supports.
- Galway City Council Councillors' grant €26,000, ring-fenced for remedial building works in Blue Teapot Theatre. An initial payment of €13,000 was received in 2023, €13,000 followed and a further €15,000 was awarded in 2024. Refurbishments were completed in April 2024.

**Galway County Council** funded preparatory work for *Fairy Tree* awarding €1,200 towards advance school visits in the county.

**HSE Lotto – West** granted €1500 for classes in yoga, voice & puppetry

**GRETB REACH** fund granted €3,521 for educational aids & IT equipment

**The Ireland Funds' Heart of The Community Fund** awarded €10,000 towards an external evaluation report of *Fairy Tree* project (in 2025).

### **Fundraising Events**

- The annual Christmas Swim raised €4,065 by families & friends of immediate beneficiaries.
- Corporate event *Big Bang 2024* was held in December 2024 by Galway Executive Skillnet and ICEGroup which raised €6,125.
- Many individuals gave once off donations totalling €3,620 which exceeded our overall 2024 fundraising target.



## Let's be Friends

Blue Teapot Friends Scheme was launched with varying levels of support available from individual donors to corporate sponsorship. In 2024, we were delighted to on-board business sponsors Bon Secours Hospital Galway, Galway Taverns Ltd (The King's Head), ICE Group and Galway Executive Skillnet. Brendan Macken joined as a member of our Chorus.

By becoming a Friend of Blue Teapot, you will play a part in our future, directly supporting the artistic work we do, radically transforming theatre practices by telling stories through the lens of disability, creating a world where the arts and society are fully inclusive for people with disability.

### There are 4 levels of engagement:

<b>In the Chorus:</b>	Annual subscription €100+
<b>Supporting Role:</b>	Annual subscription €500+
<b>Rising Star:</b>	Annual subscription €1,000+
<b>Leading role:</b>	Annual subscription €5,000+

Blue Teapot is an authorised body under the Charitable Donation Scheme with tax relief available on annual donations above €250.

**Let's talk,** If you would like more information or to discuss the Blue Teapot Friends scheme please contact Jane Parsons - [exec.director@blueteapot](mailto:exec.director@blueteapot)





## NDA Annual Conference 2024

Promoting the participation of disabled people in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport in Ireland – UNCRPD Article 30

Thursday, 24 October 2024

## A Belief in Equality

In October, actor Kieran Coppinger & Petal Pilley were invited to speak at the 2024 National Disability Authority Conference - Arts & Creativity panel, chaired by Feargal Ó Coigligh, Secretary General, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

The conference looked at Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in Ireland, which focuses on the participation of people with disabilities in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.

Issues discussed included the extent to which Article 30 of UNCRPD is being realised in Ireland; barriers faced by disabled people with regard to participation and potential solutions to these challenges, as well as good practices in Ireland and other countries.

For more information on the conference:

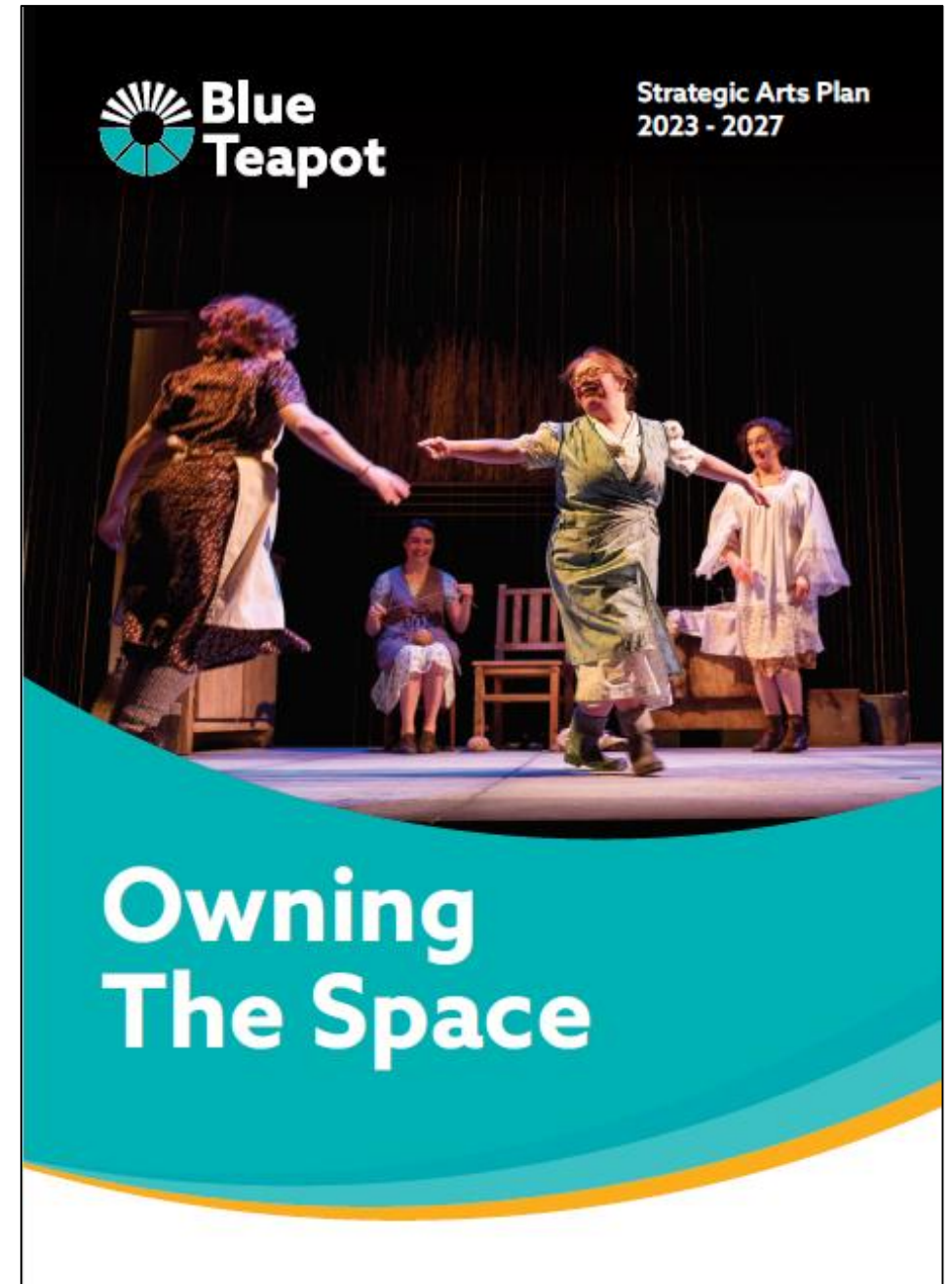
<https://nda.ie/publications/nda-annual-conference-2024>

## STRATEGIC ARTS PLAN 2023-2027

*Owning The Space* is our first Strategic Arts Plan and sets out our vision for the five years. The plan is built on three key priorities of **Production, Progression** and **Provision** and is a response to the positive development of disability arts in Ireland over the last 20 years. Creating the strategy took two years involving company artists, staff, freelance tutors and Board and developed in consultation with arts advisor & cultural planning specialist Mary McAuliffe.

*"The Board of Blue Teapot is delighted to be presenting such a visionary and progressive Strategic Arts Plan. Delivering on its goals and objectives will nurture and progress the skills and talents of the company artists and help inform arts and disability policy in Ireland. We look forward to ambitious and exciting times ahead."* - Chairperson Fiona Coffey,

*Owning The Space* purposely aligns with the Government of Ireland Culture 2025 policy and the Arts Council's 10-year strategy Making Great Art Work. It informs the development and delivery of artistic programmes and shapes Blue Teapot's role as influencers in the longer-term for disability arts across Ireland. The plan is available to view/download at [www.bluteapot.ie](http://www.bluteapot.ie) which includes accessibility controls for the visually impaired.







We have a strongly held ethos that people with an intellectual disability (ID), with the right supports, can make art on a par with mainstream artists.

We are committed to ensuring that the contribution ID artists make to Ireland's cultural life is recognised, valued and understood.

In 2024, our organisation benefitted 52 ID artists at varying stages of careers or interests – professional actors, performing arts students and community theatre participants - in achieving their individual potential through theatre, arts education and providing a guiding model for accessibility in the arts.

## We Are Theatre Change Makers

# Our Values

*As a theatre company, we operate within a framework of legal and regulatory obligations and a range of codes of good practice. In addition, we are guided by a set of values that include:*

## A Commitment to Excellence



We promote freedom of thought and of expression to develop new ideas and new work and strive to achieve the highest artistic standards in the work we make and produce

## A Belief in Equality



We are committed to equality, cultural rights, diversity in all its forms and the advancement of inclusive theatre practices

## Dynamic and Sustainable



We are dynamic and adaptable and will evolve our business model to meet the changing needs of our company

## Accountable and Transparent



We are open and accountable in our decision making and communicate respectfully with partners and stakeholders

## Environmental Awareness



We will identify and take actions to improve our environmental practices





# Strategic Arts Plan

## PRODUCTION

- **Grow investment in theatre productions**

- ✓ 2024-25 Philanthropic fund allocation achieved.
- ✓ Core funding increased in 2024 budget.
- ✓ Arts Council grant received for Fairy Tree

- **Diversify productions**

- ✓ Work in Progress co-production with Theatre Lovett complete.
- ✓ Inclusive Children's Workshops in Baboro International Festival for Children facilitated by Blue Teapot's actors.
- ✓ Programmed in Oska Bright Film Festival UK.
- ✓ County tour of children's show (Fairy Tree)

- **Environment & Green Arts Policy**

- ✓ Energy usage data collected to quantify current CO2 emissions.
- ✓ Talking with SEAI & Galway City Council.
- ✓ Registered with the SEAI Sustainable Energy Community programme
- ✓ Identifying potential financial support for environmental upgrades.

# Strategic Arts Plan

## PROGRESSION

- **New supports to meet individual needs of artists**

- ✓ Successful first year (one of 5) of WorkAbility Programme & recruitment of staff.
- ✓ New collaborations and residency (Theatre Lovett).
- ✓ Identification of individual skills development pathways for theatre ensemble.
- ✓ Attended recruitment and school leaver fairs for Performing Arts School.

- **Develop structured progression pathways**

- ✓ Performing Arts School prospectus created.
- ✓ Work experience programme for PAS 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.
- ✓ New ensemble actors recruited and active in the company, following national campaign.
- ✓ Alumni Database created.



# Strategic Arts Plan

## PROVISION

- **Securing a permanent home**
  - ✓ Building purchased.
  - ✓ Renovations underway.
  - ✓ Investigating environmental upgrades.
- **Skilled, resourced & develop business supports**
  - ✓ Staff training opportunities provided.
  - ✓ Policies created, reviewed and updated.
- **Advocate for Inclusive theatre work practices**
  - ✓ Diversity & Inclusion policy approved.
  - ✓ Attend sector steering groups and symposium
  - ✓ Contributed to national research project.
- **Capitalise on Technology**
  - ✓ Stop Motion workshops delivered.
  - ✓ Information sharing and network
  - ✓ Attended various knowledge events.

# 2024 COMPANY

## DIRECTORS

Fiona Coffey (Chair), Sean Conneally (Secretary), Gerardine Lally, Anthony Casey, Mary Seale O’Flaherty, James C Harrold, Eilish O’Sullivan, Mary Foyle and Orla Haddigan.

## COMPANY MEMBERS

Lali Morris, Claude Madec, Noelle Burke, Ann Loughney, Michelle Kenny, Eamon Loughrey and Marina Moore.

## DIRECTOR OF SERVICES/ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Petal Pilley.

## EMPLOYEES

Sonja Brodie, Hillary Kavanagh, Ana Bella Alvarez, Jason Scott, Judith Wolf, Dave Donovan, Jane Parsons, Rebecca Malone and James Flanagan.

## C.E. SCHEME/TUS

Michael Patrick Breen, Rosah Mangan, Anna Walsh and Barry Ryan (TUS).

## VOLUNTEERS

Oonagh Hassett, Marta Rodriguez, Sharon Conacur, Fionnuala Barrett, Anele Ngobo, Katie Lynch and Paddy O’Connell.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Bernadette O’Brien (Chartered Management Accountant), MK Brazil (Auditors), Plato Now (Payroll), Federation of Voluntary Bodies (Pension Administration).

## TUTORS *(freelance)*

Charmian Goodall, Rod Goodall, Aine Lawless, Fiona O’Dea, Sinead Hackett, Train Station Gym, Catherine Collins, Brendan Savage, Judith Higgins, Michael Patrick Breen, Rosah Mangan, Miquel Barcelo, Lisa Sweeney, Sarah O’Toole, Lucy Bleeker and Orla McGovern.

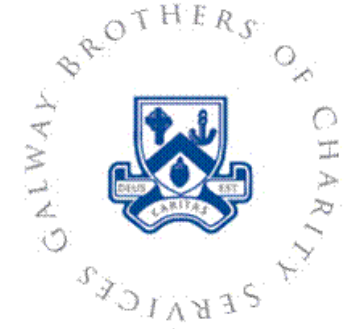
## PAS PROGRAMME BOARD

Trish Cunningham, Mike Masterson, Sean Conneally, Síomha Nee and Fiona O’Dea.



# 2024 FUNDERS

We greatly appreciate the funding agents, organisations and every individual who choses to fund or nominate Blue Teapot as a beneficiary. No matter how small or large the donation, we are so grateful. Heartfelt Thank You to all.



Clár Éire Ildánach  
Creative Ireland  
Programme



This project is co-funded by the Government of Ireland, through the Department of Social Protection, and the European Union.



## IMAGE CREDITS

Cover	Ensemble with choreographer Kévin Coquelard, <i>The Myth of Echo &amp; Narcissus</i> , a work in progress. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
3	Louis Lovett and Patrick Becker, <i>The Myth of Echo &amp; Narcissus</i> , a work in progress. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
5	Actor Kieran Coppinger. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
6	Fantasy A and Paul Connolly, Oska Bright Film Festival. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
7	Choreographer Kévin Coquelard and Patrick Becker, <i>The Myth of Echo &amp; Narcissus</i> , a work in progress. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
8	Michael Hayes, Paul Connolly, Valerie Egan, Jennifer Cox, Charlene Kelly, Marion Cronin and Emer Macken, <i>The Myth of Echo &amp; Narcissus</i> , a work in progress. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
9	Choreographer Kévin Coquelard, Paul Connolly, Michael Hayes, Cormac Crawford & Grace O'Brien, <i>The Myth of Echo &amp; Narcissus</i> , a work in progress. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
10	Jennifer Cox with Ruthgar (Paul Connolly), <i>Fairy Tree</i> . <i>Image: Andrew Downes</i>
11	Kieran Coppinger, <i>Fairy Tree</i> . <i>Image: Andrew Downes</i>
12	Cast of <i>Fairy Tree</i> . <i>Image: Andrew Downes</i>
13	Paul Connolly & Grace O'Brien with St. Iognáid Primary School children, <i>Fairy Tree</i> accompanying workshops. <i>Image: Andrew Downes</i>
14	Rod Goodall & Kieran Coppinger with Rosie, <i>Fairy Tree</i> . <i>Image: Andrew Downes</i>
16	Kieran Coppinger & Michael Hayes with Scoil Bhríde National School; <i>Fairy Tree</i> accompanying workshops. <i>Image: Anita Murphy</i>
17	Jess Howard & Aoibhin O'Brien, PAS students. <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
18	Aidan Cassidy, Anna Nic Lochlainn, Holly Glover, Elva Frey, Lauren Cahill, and Ciarán Quinn, 2024 new students. <i>Image: Jason Scott</i>
19	Caoimhe McMahon & James Wallace, Performing Arts School puppetry module. <i>Image: Jason Scott</i>
20	Grace Hannon, PAS Student, <i>Murder in the Beehive</i> . <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
21	Mary Grace Best Lydon, PAS student, <i>Murder in the Beehive</i> . <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
22	James Wallace & Andrew Quinn, PAS students, <i>Murder in the Beehive</i> . <i>Image: Hillary Kavanagh</i>
23	Francis Carr, Roksana Kazmierska, Robert Comer, Mary Grace Best Lydon & Andrew Quinn, PAS graduates. <i>Photos: Andrew Downes</i>
24	Alison Bourke & Dougie De Jager in <i>An Epic Journey</i> . <i>Image: Emilija Jefremova</i>
25	Liam O'Connell, Ella Hannon (front) with Emily Martin, Ana Alvarez and Adrian Carney in <i>An Epic Journey</i> . <i>Image: Emilija Jefremova</i>



## IMAGE CREDITS continued

- 27 Top. Bright Soul participants: Aaron Keogh, Sean Monaghan, Karl Flaherty, front row, Elva Grace Fray, Jennifer Keaveney, Sean Fahy, Maire Connolly. Bottom. Sean Monaghan. Bright Soul Volunteer, Oonagh Hassett. *Image: Hillary Kavanagh*
- 28 Rebecca Malone, James Flanagan & Ana Alvarez. *Image: Jason Scott*
- 29 Stanlin Joy Hirang, PAS Student. *Image: Jason Scott*
- 30 Patrick Becker. *Image: Jason Scott*
- 33 Niamh Mitchell, PAS Costume Design module. *Image: Jason Scott*
- 34 Jennifer Cox with the staff of Bons Secours.
- 35 Petal Pilley & Kieran Coppinger on stage at the NDA Conference, Aviva Stadium, Dublin.
- 36 Emma O’Grady, Grace Kiely, Jennifer Cox & Tara Breathnach, *Dancing at Lughansa*. *Image: Andrew Downes*
- 38 Valerie Egan, *Into the Dark Woods*. *Image: Andrew Downes*
- 46 Jennifer Cox, Patrick Becker, Paul Connolly & Kieran Coppinger, *Into the Dark Woods*. *Image: Andrew Downes*







**Blue Teapot Theatre Company**

Munster Avenue  
Galway Ireland  
H91 FVF8

+353 91 520 977

**blueteapot.ie**

