

A TIME TO GROW
STRATEGY 2023 – 2027



Published by Dublin Youth Dance Company (2022)
Dublin Youth Dance Company CLG is a registered charity and a non-profit-making company limited by guarantee.

Registered Charity Number: 20205379
Company Registration Number: 355549

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dance
experience

inclusion &
engagement

connections

capacity

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We are proud to publish A TIME TO GROW, DYDC's strategy for 2023-2027. Key principles of good governance and reflective practice informed the development of this strategy, and the process was enriched by the contributions of many within and outside the company to whom we are very grateful.

INTRODUCTION

A TIME TO GROW sets out our intentions to develop the work of DYDC in a period that encompasses the 25th anniversary of the company's foundation. We are as mature and as full of promise as the century itself: proud of our achievements, determined to secure them, and ambitious to grow them.

Our new strategy is in part a re-statement of abiding commitments; in part a re-setting of aims and objectives to take account of the ever-changing context within which we work; and in part an identification of new actions we will take to ensure that, like young people themselves, we face forward with confidence and excitement about all the life to be lived and all the dancing to be done!

Quality is at the heart of our work: on stage and in the studio; in our many working partnerships and in our relationships at home and abroad. The ecosystem of contemporary dance here means that youth dance has an especially important part to play in the presence and progress of this artform in Ireland.

While DYDC is Ireland's premier contemporary youth dance company, we do not walk alone, nor dance our mission without the support of many: members, alumni, funders, partners and supporters in the overlapping worlds of dance, the arts, local government, and provision for young people. Our values and strategic priorities are aligned with our key partners, including Dublin City Council, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, particularly with respect to young people, access, diversity and quality arts experience.

The Arts Council's 10-year strategy, *Making Great Art Work* (2016 – 2025) also greatly informs all that we do. Specifically, its recently published dance policy, *Advancing Dance* (2022-2025) focuses on strengthening and developing pathways to professional dance. DYDC has a flagship role in that regard, and we are committed to playing that leadership role fully to the benefit of youth dance and the wider dance world.

We invite all of you to read our new strategy and, more importantly, to read yourself into our strategy so that together we can grow youth dance in Ireland.

Sharon Murphy, Chairperson
Mariam Ribón, Artistic Director



OUR STORY SO FAR

2001

The Company hosts the first Irish Youth Dance Festival (IYDF) at the Pavilion Theatre in Dún Laoghaire, with youth dance groups from all corners of Ireland. The event is a huge success and has since become an annual festival which continues to grow in its scope and vision.

2000

2000

Dublin Youth Dance Company (DYDC) is initiated by JJ Formento under the supervision of Robert Connor and Loretta Yurick at the Dance Theatre of Ireland, with support from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. Its objective is to give young people the opportunity to engage in training, creating and performing contemporary dance.

Within a year the group is invited to represent Ireland at the Merseyside Summer Festival 2000, where it presents its first dance piece, 'Rites'.

2001

2003

2003

Mariam Ribón is appointed Artistic Director of both Dublin Youth Dance Company and the Irish Youth Dance Festival to oversee an expanded programme of artistic and educational activities.

In that same year, the Company is granted funding from the Arts Council for the first time.

2007

DYDC participates in its first international exchange at Encuentros de Danza, Spain, beginning a rich tradition of dance at festivals and events across Europe.

2008

2008

DYDC appears at the Noisemoves festival, the first of dozens of performances and partnerships between the Company and its national youth dance contemporaries.

2009

2009

The Company receives a Per Cent for Art public art commission by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (dlr) County Council. Members create a dance work with transition year and school students, performed at the Pavilion Theatre.

From this project, a new Junior Company is established, offering young dancers access and opportunity to engage with contemporary dance.

2012

2012

DYDC is awarded An Cathaoirleach's Arts Award for the dlr County Council local authority area.

2013

2013

The IYDF is selected for 'Culture Connects', the national culture programme marking Ireland's presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Company is also awarded the Creative Practitioners Award: Primary Schools 2013 - 2015 by dlr County Council.

2014

2014

The Arts Council funds DYDC under the Young People, Children and Education Programme Activity Fund for the first time.

DYDC creates a new dance piece under commission for the opening of the dlr Lexlcon in Dún Laoghaire.

2015

2015

The Company makes its debut performance as part of Dublin Dance Festival with 'Linear Flow', featuring 99 young dancers performing at the Grand Canal Plaza in Dublin's Docklands. It also creates the film 'Fling' in collaboration with Director Terence White, through funding from the Arts Council's Young Ensemble Scheme.

2016

2016

DYDC collaborates with lens-based artist Sharon Murphy, composer Michael Gallen and voice director Andrea Ainsworth to create 'Moving On'.

2018

2017

DYDC is awarded Strategic Funding from the Arts Council, which "invests in and supports the essential infrastructure required to sustain and develop the arts in Ireland".

2019

2019

DYDC establishes three sections of its Company: Senior, Transition and Junior Ensembles.

The Company performs alongside Liz Roche Company in 'Näher... closer, nearer, sooner' at the Goethe-Institut Ireland.

2021

2021

The 'Resilience Programme' is launched in response to the Covid-19 pandemic: a series of special commissions designed to sustain the youth dance community, the dance community at large and their sense of collective creativity and commitment to quality practice.

2022

2022

DYDC receives a Capacity Grant from the Arts Council to progress the aims and objectives laid out in its new Strategy, 'A Time to Grow'.

OUR VISION

- > Ireland has a vibrant and diverse contemporary youth dance culture.
- > Young people from all backgrounds create and perform dance that's high in quality, wide in reach, contemporary in its aesthetic, and deep in its transformation of their lives.
- > Youth dance is both customary and special: a golden thread in the fabric of public provision for young people.
- > DYDC is the flagship organisation for policy and practice in contemporary youth dance.

OUR MISSION

To lead the development and delivery of high-quality contemporary youth dance in Dublin and nationally

OUR VALUES

Artistry & Excellence

We believe in the transformative quality of the arts and in the distinctive power of dance for young people to explore their ideas and feelings artistically, giving embodied expression to their experiences, past and present, and to their hopes and dreams.

In our pursuit of excellence we constantly review and improve performance in all aspects of our work from governance to teaching practices, choreography to commissioning, financial management to production values.

Access & Diversity

We believe young people from all backgrounds should have the opportunity to experience dance and, if they wish, to make it central to their lives. We provide audiences with performances that allow them to enjoy the distinctive qualities of youth dance.

Dance thrives on diversity. The diversity of contemporary Ireland – in terms of gender, culture, ethnicity, aesthetics – is a vital reservoir for youth dance.

Agency & Partnership

DYDC exists for its members and for young people more widely. Their voices and choices inform all aspects of our work.

We work in respectful relationship with many organisations that share our commitment to the nurturing of young people through the arts.

Sustainability

We are committed to the sustainable growth of our work, to balancing ambition with the responsible management of our resources, so that the effects of our work can be lasting. We include here a commitment to wider environmental sustainability and to bio-diversity.

GROW THE DANCE EXPERIENCE

Aims 1 – 4

1. Provide consistently excellent and supportive opportunities for DYDC members as young dancers and young people
 2. Ensure our dancers are taught and led by skilled and sensitive artists, always within a clearly articulated framework of pedagogical excellence and creative ambition
 3. Increase the number and expand the range of dance activities and opportunities available to young people
 4. Be known and valued as Ireland's flagship contemporary youth dance company, actively connecting youth dance and vocational training / professional practice
2. Secure and strengthen performance platforms, both independent (e.g. IYDF, Winter Gala) and joint (e.g. with Dance Ireland; Noisemoves; Laois Youth Dance Platform; St Patrick's Day Festival)
 3. Ensure appropriate and timely opportunities for developing young dancers' skills and experiences through providing programmes like:
 - (a) 'Emerging Voices'
 - (b) 'Dance Voices' and other such models to inform, mentor and otherwise support senior members exploring pathways to professional training and practice
 4. Seek opportunities for inter-disciplinary collaboration in youth arts e.g. music, film, theatre
 5. Increase the number of spaces DYDC can access and thus the range of places and settings suitable for different aspects of its work

Objectives 1 – 3

1. Ensure a robust process for the recruitment and monitoring of teachers, choreographers and others contracted to deliver DYDC programmes
2. Ensure the dance experiences we design and offer are excellent and varied in terms of: repertoire; teaching style; cultural influences; and performance platforms
3. Provide structures and supports for interaction with the professional dance sector and the world of professional dance training, including internationally

Actions 1 – 5

1. Augment core weekly training for all DYDC companies (Junior / Transition / Senior) with a programme of workshops and residencies with choreographers from different dance cultures

Metrics 1 – 5

We will review our work annually to measure progress in achieving this goal, advancing its objectives according to the following metrics:

1. The number and range of projects and programmes in the DYDC calendar have increased
2. More resources have been invested in the appraisal and documentation of the Company's work, with particular emphasis on qualitative research on the experience of the young dancers
3. Evidence of ongoing interaction with professional dance artists and companies
4. A cohort of members has continued to transition from DYDC to vocational training / professional dance
5. DYDC uses a wider range of locations and spaces to deliver its programme of work

GROW INCLUSION & ENGAGEMENT

Aims 5 – 9

5. Increase the number of DYDC company members over the lifetime of this strategy
6. Engage and excite a wider audience for our work and, in particular, broaden the diversity of young people actively participating in our various programmes and platforms
7. Strengthen the design and delivery of our dance-in-schools programme, making it more integral to the realisation of the company's mission
8. Implement our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy
9. Ensure DYDC's decision-making processes are informed by the voices and choices of young people

Objectives 4 – 8

4. Work with partners in education and local government to create access and opportunity programmes in dance for young people in both school and out-of-school settings
5. Make public engagement (inclusive of audience development) a cornerstone of our new communications plan
6. Ensure there are clear links and pathways between all elements of our programme so that our work is strategic, effective and efficient
7. Ensure the design of all programmes and partnerships is fully informed by our EDI Policy
8. Demonstrate 'best practice' in securing the meaningful engagement of members and young people in helping to shape the direction and decision-making of the Company

Actions 6 – 9

6. Work with Fingal County Council to advance cultural diversity in contemporary youth dance, initially through a feasibility study scoping how

- DYDC might engage productively with young people in one of Ireland's most culturally diverse counties
7. Augment our existing 'Discovery Dance Programme' by the introduction of
 - i) a new summer residency programme, and
 - (ii) a new series of 'Open Workshops', offering dance training and experiences that are independent of, but linked to, our annual intake process
 8. Ensure our communications plan (2022) has specific commitments and deliverables in respect of public engagement and audience development
 9. Harness the Lundy Model (2007) as the basis of our new and refreshed processes for the participation of young people in shaping the work of the Company and influencing its decision-making

Metrics 6 – 10

We will review our work annually to measure progress in achieving this goal, advancing its objectives according to the following metrics:

6. Increased numbers of young people involved
 - (a) as DYDC members and
 - (b) as participants in DYDC projects and programmes
7. Evidence of greater inclusiveness in the profile of participants, especially as regards their location and culture / ethnicity
8. Feasibility study with Fingal County Council completed and its proposals / recommendations progressed
9. Refreshed dance-in-schools programme introduced and linked to wider work of the Company
10. New summer residency programme established with clear pathway to DYDC annual intake process

GOAL 3

GROW CONNECTIONS

Aims 10 – 13

10. Extend and strengthen the network of youth dance partners in Ireland
11. Deepen DYDC's engagement with the professional dance sector
12. Create partnerships with key providers in youth arts, education, and local arts
13. Maintain and develop links with best international practice in youth dance

Objectives 9 – 12

9. Maximise the potential of the IYDF and Winter Gala as platforms for making national and international connections realised in mentoring, resource-sharing and creative collaboration
10. Ensure ongoing connection with the professional dance sector through teaching, mentoring, and choreographic opportunities
11. Establish working relationships with one or more local authorities and Education and Training Boards in the areas of arts, education and youth services
12. Represent DYDC as Ireland's leading youth dance organisation to international youth dance festivals, networks and partners

Actions 10 – 14

10. Increase the opportunities within the IYDF programme for youth dance leaders and teachers to network, take masterclasses and plan future connections and joint initiatives
11. Secure and strengthen DYDC's mentorship role in supporting emerging youth dance leaders countrywide

12. Create opportunities for professional dance artists to work in youth dance / with DYDC
13. Develop sustainable partnerships with local authorities focussed on dance-in-schools; access to spaces suitable for dance training/performance; advancing aspects of our EDI Policy; commissions
14. Grow DYDC's international profile (through promotion; residencies; visits and exchanges) and exploit fully the resulting opportunities and connections

Metrics 11 – 14

We will review our work annually to measure progress in achieving this goal, advancing its objectives according to the following metrics:

11. IYDF recognised as the key resource for collective action to raise standards, promote collaboration, witness best practice, and build momentum in Irish youth dance
12. More working interactions between DYDC and professional dance artists and companies
13. Fruitful partnership in place with Fingal County Council and other local authorities to develop youth dance
14. Greater presence of DYDC on the international youth dance circuit of festivals and events, complemented by more international dance artists and teachers working with DYDC

GOAL 4

GROW CAPACITY

Aims 14 – 18

14. Strengthen DYDC's governance at board and executive level
15. Secure a robust and sustainable business model
16. Ensure capacity to deliver the outputs of this strategy, including new actions
17. Build awareness and profile of DYDC in a range of constituencies
18. Improve documentation and evaluation of Company programmes

Objectives 12 – 17

12. Broaden the skill-set and diversity of the board
13. Provide training and development so staff are supported to implement this strategy
14. Make budgetary provision for contracting external expertise to address specialist needs and functions
15. Diversify sources of funding and other income
16. Ensure the voices and choices of young people are meaningfully represented in company decision-making
17. Grow DYDC's capacity in public relations and communications

Actions 15 – 20

15. Consolidate best practice in board renewal, staff appraisal, risk register, company handbook and related matters
16. Establish a dedicated budget to support a programme of staff development and training and of occasional contracted expertise
17. Design a rolling programme of policy development, review and renewal

18. Develop a credible financial plan that guides a realistic diversification of income streams
19. Develop and implement a communications plan, inclusive of public relations both 'internal' (especially young people) and 'external' (especially funders and partners)
20. Ensure DYDC website and social media accounts reflect the dynamic and creative nature of our mission and work

Metrics 15 – 20

We will review our work annually to measure progress in achieving this goal, advancing its objectives according to the following metrics:

15. Profile of the board reflects DYDC's corporate values and the expertise necessary to deliver this strategy
16. Structures and practices at board and management levels are regularly reviewed and adapted to meet evolving governance norms and to ensure compliance with current regulatory environment
17. Company resources are assigned to staff development and training
18. Protocols in place for inclusion of young people in key DYDC decision-making.
19. An income diversification plan is developed and implemented
20. The communications plan addresses both internal and external audiences and is delivered dynamically across a range of platforms including the company's website and social media accounts

Contemporary:

DYDC views contemporary dance as an expressive style that combines elements of several genres. Contemporary dancers strive to connect the mind and the body through fluid dance movements.

Dance Alliance Mentoring Programme:

This mentoring initiative supports new and emerging youth dance directors and leaders in Ireland. It also supports their artistic and company development. These twin actions express and affirm DYDC's leadership role in contemporary youth dance, especially as it overlaps with professional practice. We believe that collegiality and a shared agenda with other companies is good for contemporary youth dance and for the wider dance ecology in Ireland.

Dance-in-schools Programme:

DYDC creates an opportunity for children to access and experience contemporary dance in school settings. These opportunities vary from live performances and dance film screenings to interactive dance workshops, fostering enjoyment, creativity and interest in the power of the moving body and contemporary dance.

Dance Voices:

This series of podcast interviews with professional dance artists, including DYDC's international alumni, takes an in-depth look at varied dance training and professional dance life experiences.

Discovery Dance Programme:

Five intensive days of dance with guest teachers in a variety of dance styles, including ballet, urban fusion and contemporary dance. This programme is open to young dancers outside of DYDC and creates an access point for those considering auditioning for the Company into the future.

DYDC Companies:

At the core of DYDC's activities are three ensembles with members at Junior, Transition and Senior levels, engaging in weekly contemporary dance training and skills development.

Emerging Voices:

A mentoring programme for DYDC's Senior Company. This initiative emerged from the Resilience Programme, to facilitate collaboration between the professional dance sector and DYDC. Senior dancers develop their own choreography mentored by artists. The programme affirms our commitment to supporting our senior dancers to work alongside those from the professional dance community, as part of their preprofessional training.

Irish Youth Dance Festival:

Commonly referred to as 'IYDF', this is DYDC's flagship performance platform taking place over two weeks in July each year. A unique and hugely popular event, IYDF offers audiences an opportunity to see some of the most exciting up-and-coming contemporary youth dance from Ireland and overseas.

Residencies:

Week-long intensive residencies are offered to members of DYDC and, in the case of the IYDF's international residency, to all young dancers regardless of membership. Throughout the week they work with contemporary dance teachers and choreographers from Ireland and overseas to devise and develop original dance works for presentation at festivals and events. Residencies include:

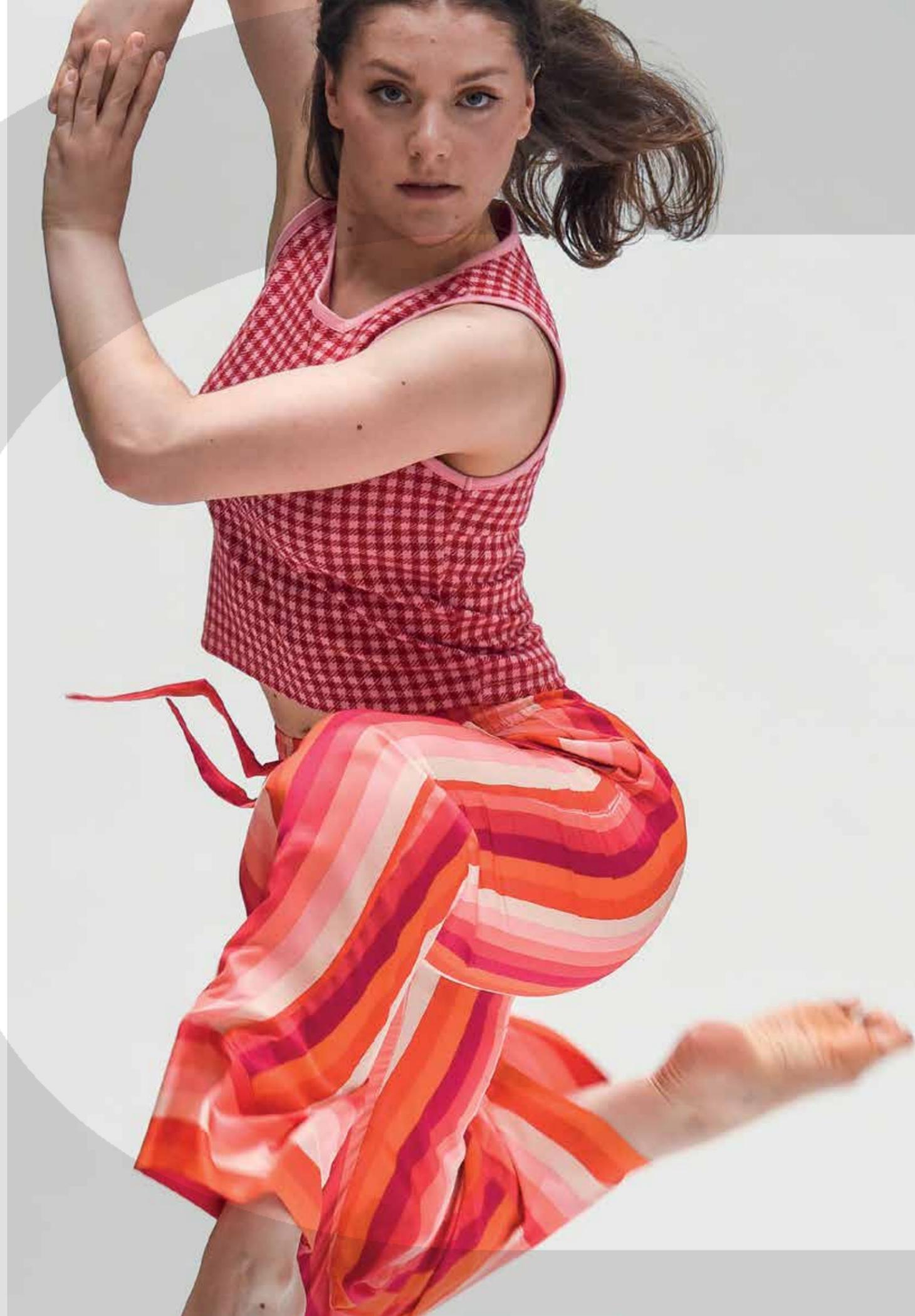
- IYDF International Dance Residency
- Senior Dance Residency (autumn)
- Junior and Transition Dance Residencies (summer)

Winter Gala:

Curated and presented by DYDC, the Winter Gala complements the IYDF, creating a second platform for young dancers to perform works commissioned by professional dance artists, in addition to featuring their own solo works and works by Company Alumni.

Youth:

For DYDC, youth refers to young people between the ages of 12 and 25.



the arts
council
= chomhairle
ealaíon

funding
dance

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