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IN Y B Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Policy & Plan

“From performers and producers to audience members, from artists to facilitators, there is room for everyone to participate, create and engage with the arts.” Arts Council, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan 2023 - 2028

Opening Statement

Irish National Youth Ballet is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture amongst everyone who engages with IN Y B. It is within our best interest to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination within the company.

IN Y B believe in the opportunity and potential to engage new audiences and widen our reach to introduce more people, from Ireland’s growing diverse population to ballet.

Our aim is to ensure that all members of IN Y B, dancers, teachers and volunteers are given equal opportunity and that IN Y B is representative of all sections of society. Each member will be respected, valued and able to give their best as a result. We will strive to make our productions accessible and inclusive so that everyone can feel welcomed to experience IN Y B’s artistry and performances.

Audiences & Outreach

Objectives:

- ***Regional Touring***
- ***Engagement with Deis Schools***
- ***Focusing on partnerships not ballet oriented***

As part of our Strategic Plan, 2023 – 2027, IN Y B intend to grow our national audience reach. Our company members are made up of young dancers from around the country, and our intention is to share our programming with and beyond the communities our dancers are representative of. IN Y B will aim to tour regionally every two years, dependent on funding. We will continue to build partnerships in urban and rural areas, in the north and south of Ireland.

With our teacher Stephen Brennan's connections with Deis Schools (he has taught ballet for 20 years as the Education Officer for Ballet Ireland), we will invite a class group each season to watch our production free of charge for them. Company member parent donations will fund this initiative and will be taken up in Winter 2023. The students will be offered a Q&A after the matinee performance and a tour of the stage/backstage to help them feel immersed in the theatre experience.

Since 2020 we have taken part in Perform Ireland which is a cross-genre dance convention held in the RDS. Offering workshops in ballet to mainly commercial dance students helps to expose these dancers to ballet in a friendly and fun atmosphere which might encourage some of them to try out regular ballet classes. In 2024 we will embark on a collaboration with DYDC to create a piece of work for the Irish Youth Dance Festival again bringing the genre of ballet to a more contemporary dance audience.

IN Y B continues to work towards providing open and accessible engagement opportunities by offering free events to combat financial restrictions, such as Culture Night workshops, online classes for those who cannot travel to participate, broadcasting all shows on our YouTube channel shortly after performance dates for those who cannot get to the theatre during our run, and open auditions for all of age 10 to 20.

Company Members (Dancers)

Objectives:

- ***Commitment to fairness and respect***
- ***Providing a safe and inclusive space for our young dancers***
- ***Cultivate youth voice through artist collaboration***
- ***Developing our Boys Associate Programme***

This policy reinforces our commitment to providing equality and fairness to all our members and not provide less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, sexuality, religion, or belief. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All members of IN Y B will be treated with fairness and respect. They will be given help and encouragement to reach their full potential and utilise their unique talent. Therefore, the skills and resources of IN Y B will be fully utilised and we will maximise the efficiency of the company. IN Y B's continues to strive to ensure that our company is a safe and inclusive space for our young dancers.

Irish National Youth Ballet commitments:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued.
- To create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for everyone.

- To not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying – including homophobic or transphobic bullying – or harassment and to discipline those who breach this policy.
- To make training, development and progression opportunities available to everyone who partakes in the activities of the company.
- To promote equality in the company, which Irish National Youth Ballet believes is crucial to ensuring the dignity of the people involved with INYB.
- To encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination to raise their concerns so we can apply corrective measures.
 - the procedure for dancers raising concerns is to go to the Artistic Director for any dance queries or concerns around injury/illness/progression within the company or any other artistic concerns; the Administrator for financial concerns or issues with forms/registrations/scheduling; and the Parents Committee if it is an issue they feel cannot be brought to the above. In case of the latter, the Parents Committee will inform the Chair of the concern raised.
- To encourage all members to treat others with respect and dignity.
- To regularly review our practices and procedures so that fairness is always maintained.
- To provide appropriate and inclusive changing facilities for all company members in rehearsal spaces.
- To provide all company members and staff the opportunity to establish their preferred pronouns.

IN Y B will continue to hold open auditions that provides any young ballet dancer the opportunity to engage with the audition process. As part of our strategic goals, we will work hard to expand our networks to ensure all ballet teachers and schools are aware of our auditions and that we can continue to embrace a new cohort of potential company members each year. Providing inclusive, open auditions gives young dancers the opportunity to audition and hone this aspect of their training that they may miss the opportunity to do elsewhere.

Youth voice is an important aspect of the structure and culture of IN Y B. To ensure the Board and management are hearing the needs and suggestions of our company members, our Group representatives (Junior, Intermediate, Senior) present to the Board twice a year, an insightful opportunity for the Board to hear directly from our young dancers. Group reps are voted on for each level and these reps help to gather information and opinions from the dancers to pass on to staff, the Board, and parents committee. They also help to coordinate content for social media channels which was by request of the dancers at a board meeting in 2021.

Youth voice is encouraged through engaging with the dancers in choosing a choreographer for the Spring season. They will be shown approximately 4 showreels of work from 4 choreographers who have expressed an interest in working with the company in order to give their opinions and feelings on those choreographers' work.

Since the beginning of the spring season 2016, Irish National Youth Ballet (IN Y B) has been sponsoring a programme designed to encourage and develop the confidence and abilities of young men with an interest in dance. Anyone who identifies as male who wishes to join the programme, should be at least 8 years old and have a minimum of 1 year of ballet training. They should also be very committed to the programme and have the support of their parents/ carers.

The male dancer and particularly he who practices ballet is often an isolated student amongst a dancing school crammed with girls. Here in Ireland, though lessening somewhat, there remains a stigma regarding men in dance. By bringing them together we can offer support and specialised training opportunities and importantly, confidence in who they are and to what they aspire.

Once they have completed the programme and should they so choose, participants can audition to become full- time members of the company. They will have experienced at close quarters the life and spirit of IN Y B before doing so. Currently 20% of the dancers are male. Lindsay Ashe-Browne, Artistic Director at IN Y B intends to extend and expand this programme throughout forthcoming seasons.

Company structure

Objectives:

- ***Fair pay for Artists***
- ***Succession planning***

We are striving to ensure representation across staff and collaborators, and this is something that we are constantly engaging with and reviewing on an annual basis, in line with this evolving policy and strategy.

We have set an hourly rate of €50 per hour for teaching staff and a fee of €2500 for a choreography commission. If this choreographer is from overseas, we will also cover a return flight and accommodation for the creation process. If they are from Ireland, we will cover travel expenses/mileage. These fees are in line with other youth companies, and it is always agreed in advance of any work undertaken. Payment is made on receipt of an invoice usually monthly. Production staff set their own fees but again it is agreed before work commences.

Succession planning is an ongoing focus for IN Y B, and we will continue to develop the composition of our board throughout our 5-year Strategic Plan. IN Y B carries out an open board recruitment process, with public advertisement for our board vacancies.

Responsibility & Monitoring of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Plan

Irish National Youth Ballet's equality and diversity policy is fully supported by the Artistic Director and the Board of Trustees. A sub-group of our board, with input from our Artistic Director and stakeholders (including company members, staff and parents committee), oversee the monitoring of our EDI policy and strategy. The policy is considered on an ongoing basis and is formally reviewed twice annually.