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Performative Arts and Pedagogy: An Irish Perspective [1]

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Abstract

This report resulted from a number of meetings in the context of *The Performative Arts and Pedagogy Project – Towards the Development of an International Glossary* (for further details click here). Representatives from five different countries (Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Switzerland) have contributed to the project, engaging in an interdisciplinary and intercultural exchange that aims at an increased awareness of (culture-)specific concepts and associated terminologies that are applied in Performative Arts and Pedagogy contexts.

1 Prologue

In terms of size of population Ireland is the smallest of the countries represented in the Performative Pedagogy Glossary project (see population estimates below):

- Ireland: 4.8 million
- Switzerland: 8.2 million
- Austria: 8,8 million
- UK: 66 million
- Germany: 82 million

Whenever reference to infrastructure is made in our discussions it needs to be borne in mind that the countries represented in this project differ (significantly) in terms of historical developments, cultural traditions, institutions, economic performance etc. Even though Ireland might be very ambitious, it is to be expected that economically stronger countries have a more solid infrastructure in a number of areas, including the arts and education.

As within our project frequent reference will be made to *theatre as an art form*, it is noteworthy that Austria founded its first national theatre in 1741 ('Burgtheater', from 1776 referred to as 'Teutsches Nationaltheater'), in Germany the 'Hamburger Nationaltheater' was founded in Hamburg in

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1767, the Berlin 'Königliches Nationaltheater' in 1786. Ireland's first and only National Theatre, the 'Abbey Theatre' was founded in 1904. Despite the rich theatre tradition in the UK (for example, Shakespeare's Globe) it seems that the first National Theatre building opened in London in 1976/77, in Switzerland the Zurich Schauspielhaus (beginnings date back to 1892) would be considered the nation's main theatre.

The question raised here is: *In what sense and to what extent is theatre as an art form valued in our countries?* To what extent is the appreciation, for example, reflected in the physical infrastructure (prestigious theatre buildings)? Is the bulk of the funding in support of 'high art' (National Theatres, Operas etc.), and *what exactly is education's share of the funding*? To what extent do our education systems connect to, develop or resist this visible 'high art' cultural capital.



Figure 1: The Abbey Theatre, National Theatre of Ireland. Image: Ros Kavanagh

This would need further research and goes beyond the scope of this report. However, should the information in an *Irish Times* article (O'Halloran 2016) entitled 'Shameful gap' in arts spending between State and Europe' be correct, then Ireland lags far behind, spending merely 1/6 of the European average on the arts.

Despite the significant underfunding of the arts, the good news is that generally speaking the arts seem to be well respected among the Irish population. Finneran (2016) refers to a report that states "that attendance at theatre is above the European average but it remains a minority pursuit with 45% of the adult population (15+) having attended theatre/opera/musical/comedy events in 2014, with only 24% of them having done so more than once. The report cites a significant correlation between participation in the arts and attendance in the arts" (110). Finneran concludes that in general, theatre attendance seems to be healthy and hypothesizes "that in Ireland there exists

for many people a broader embodiment and engagement with drama[2] which lies beyond the theatre walls. There also clearly exists in Ireland a belief in the importance of engagement with the arts, possibly in pursuit of a broad and balanced education, or perhaps for reasons of acquisition of the social capital that is associated with participation in the arts." (111)

The strong belief in the importance of engagement with the arts must be seen in the context of a rich aesthetic amateur tradition. In his short prose piece 'A Stage by the Sea' (1997), contemporary Austrian writer Christoph Ransmayr who was based in Ireland for many years, takes us back into a previous century and leads us to a place on the South Irish coast where, amidst beautiful nature, there is music and dance under the open skies. There, active participation in performing arts is experienced as a natural and integral component of everyday existence:

> For on Sunday evenings on Glaisín Álainn there gathered farmers, fishermen, beachcombers, turf-cutters, artisans and the Irish servants of English manor-houses, an audience that travelled for hours by foot or at best on their bikes from the farmsteads and hamlets of West Cork to take part here in something which under less modest circumstances and in less stormy places is called performing arts: what dancing there was at Liam O'Shea's! Dancing, singing, the telling of stories and recitation of ballads to the tune of the button-accordion or tin-whistle, and all that under the open skies on a stage that Liam O'Shea had built in the middle of his meadow from sea-sand and stones worn smooth by the tides and which his audience simply called the platform.
>
> On Liam O'Shea's platform on Sunday evenings every member of the audience could transform themselves into a wildly acclaimed performer, anyone who had just been listening in sadness or amusement could rise, reach for the accordion or tin whistle and begin to play or sing to the applause of singers and musicians about to lapse into attentive silence.

Christoph Ransmayr turns the spotlight on the rich Irish cultural tradition of storytelling, improvised music and performance. As our project focuses on the role of the performative arts in pedagogical contexts, it is noteworthy that *staging is accomplished with the simplest means*, and that within a simple setting transformative experiences become possible:

> O'Shea's stone stage had no roof, not a single wall that might shelter it from wind and rain, no curtain, no flight of steps. Hardly raised above the pasture surrounding it, performers could step onto it simply by clambering over gorse and grass, and with this one stride could leave a whole world behind them: they entered into a melody, a ballad, a burst of applause or laughter in which their lives suddenly seemed new and different, transfigured into chords and words.

[2] In the context of our project it is noteworthy that Finneran uses the terms drama and theatre interchangeably.

We cannot give a comprehensive account of the impressive contemporary Irish landscape of community-based theatre, including Irish language-based theatre, but in the following section will refer to examples of more recent projects

2 Performative Arts in the Community

There is a long and varied history of amateur dramatics across rural Ireland with a strong tradition of community participation in local productions. These local groups often take part in competitive regional and national festivals which have gained media visibility in recent years. Organisations such as Drama League of Ireland supports nearly 300 member groups (offering training, advice, scripts, insurance, etc), and Amateur Drama Council of Ireland organises national festival circuits (over 46 in 2018). With these types of community based activities there is clear engagement with and through the performative and an as such unnamed learning from participation. However, these performances normally happen in a competitive environment with a focus on how 'good' a production can be. This practice under the label of 'Amateur Drama' has an impact on how theatre arts are perceived across these communities. Companies such as Druid Theatre, which has toured many shows internationally, started out touring the amateur festival circuits outlined above showing that these organisations are pathways through to professional theatre. Indeed Sabina Higgins, wife of Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, worked with Druid Theatre and has always been an avid support of Performative Arts

Noteworthy in the context of community theatre in an international framework is Eve Ensler's work which started out with what could be described as documentary theatre -based on interviews from which she developed a one-woman show- *The Vagina Monologues,* but which is now an international day of action, V-Day. Now this play is read by many voices around the globe and the events developed further into an activist movement called One Billion Rising with a call out for local communities to highlight issues of violence against women.[3] The play was be performed on the UCC campus as part of this international campaign in February 2019 organized by student groups. This event offers just one familiar model of local action within a global framework. In a further particular example at UCC, staff at the Theatre department have organized local dances for the worldwide event of Global Water Dances.[4] (Also discussed in the context of water rights and embodiment (see O'Gorman 2019)).[5]

The following examples of practice are focused on the work of some of the report's authors in a research/educational context that link back out from the academy into community/cultural spaces.

The Global Water Dances Cork event connected to over a 100 other international Global Water Dances worldwide through a shared vision of

[3] See: www.onebillionrising.org
[4] See: www.globalwaterdances.org

addressing local water issues through embodied engagement. The Cork group involved children, professional dancers, teenage youth theatre groups, and international students and local community members working together through an embodied performative practice leading to a public event as part of Cork Midsummer Festival in June 2017 and again in June 2019.



Figure 2: Finale of Global Water Dances Cork Event 2017. Image: Inma Pavon

Further at a local level in the Department of Theatre, UCC, Róisín O'Gorman and Fionn Woodhouse have developed classroom based work which they have taken to the streets as part of the Cork Community Artlink (CCAL) project, The Dragon of Shandon,[6] which is an annual night-time community parade at Samhain (an ancient Irish festival marking the start of winter on the 31st Oct) each year (see O'Gorman 2018). The parade involves diverse communities across Cork city coming together under the guidance of CCAL to create a parade led by large animated skeleton Dragon followed by troupes of bones collectors and other creatures of the dark night through the streets of Cork.

In the above picture students and staff from the Department of Theatre perform as Bone Whisperers interacting with the public as part of a module entitled 'Cultures of Movement and Place'. During this module students explore through embodied engagement a range of methods of movement practices in order to performatively understand place, movement and cultures.

Finally *Cork's World Theatre*, an adaptation of Swiss playwright Thomas Hürlimann's play *Das Einsiedler Welttheater 2007*, is an example of an intercultural community theatre project that began in a pedagogical context.

Stephen Boyd and Manfred Schewe who had translated and adapted



Figure 3: The Dragon of Shandon waking the living. Image: Dragan Tomas



Figure 4: The Bone Whisperers. Image: Marcin Lewandowski

Hürlimann's text tried out performative approaches to the English translation with BA students of Language and Literature and also with MA students of Drama and Theatre Studies. This opened their eyes to the specific qualities of the text and inspired concrete ideas about how it could be performed. At the centre of *Cork's World Theatre* is the threat of imminent climate change: The city's river Lee runs dark when an End Wind approaches. The audience follow the responses of seven characters who face ultimate ecological meltdown.



Figure 5: "My skin's dissolving into a thousand wrinkles ...". Mairín Prendergast as WORLD. Photo: Stephan Koch

A creative cooperation between the University, the Cork School of Music and Cyclone Repertory Company resulted in public performances of *Cork's World Theatre* in UCC's Aula Maxima in 2010 (for further details see Boyd/Schewe 2010).

These events offer examples of theatre pedagogies which take to the streets in order to foster thoughtful communities both in and beyond the classroom.

3 Professional Theatre and Theatre in Education

Whilst there is a good professional theatre infrastructure in Ireland with access to theatre spaces across the country, there is little evidence of education/outreach strands connected to venues. The Abbey Theatre in Dublin has a dedicated Outreach officer with some other theatres offering content aimed at a school audience or occasional community engagement projects. One such programme was run by *Change of Address*, a collective of artists (actors, directors, applied theatre workers) who engage in performative work with refugees and asylum

seekers[7], working towards the production of plays, where refugees perform for the community. *Change of Address* has operated since 2015 and is committed to running theatre workshops with refugees both at the Abbey Theatre rehearsal space[8], as well in Direct Provision centres (adult refugees), as well as a number of Arts Centres around the Dublin area. Indeed, as Finneran points, out, often outreach/education programmes can be based in Arts Centres which offer a wider range of services and may not have a performance space. Here again Finneran notes that 'embodiment and engagement with drama which lies beyond the theatre walls'(111) is visible, but possibly there are ways these venues, with the right support, could channel the engagement through their doors. One such avenue has been a change in theatres' relationship to 'Educational Theatre' with the Arts Council 2012 review of how curriculum plays can be supported recommending further funding for the sector. The fortunes of companies working in Theatre in Education/ Theatre for Young Audiences in Ireland has been mixed from long established companies such as TEAM Theatre, which regularly performed to over 10,000 young people annually in a school setting, closing their doors in 2014 after 38 years in operation to newer companies such as Cyclone Repertory which has grown school audience from 1500 in 2010 to 27,000 in 2018 (primarily in a theatre setting) giving an indication of the state of flux.

4 Performative Arts in Primary Level Education

Primary schools in Ireland (for children aged 4 – 12) have a curriculum area entitled 'The Arts Education' containing the subjects Visual Arts, Drama and Music. Whilst Visual Arts and Music featured in the previous curriculum (Govt. of Ireland, 1971), the inclusion of Drama as a subject in its own right was a significant development when the current curriculum was published in 1999. Finneran (2008) provides a chronology of events which he believes contributed to the achievement of subject status for drama beginning with a report on the arts in education published by the Arts Council (Benson, 1979) which stated that drama both as a methodology and as an activity in its own right warranted more attention. Three national conferences on drama in education were organised between 1987 and 1989 which brought prominent international drama practitioners to Ireland and in the 1990s, a series of conferences organised by the National Association for Youth Drama (now called Youth Theatre Ireland), continued to build on this advocacy for drama (Finneran, 2008). The 1990s saw considerable activity in educational policy and curriculum reform culminating in the publication of a White Paper in which the importance of the arts in education featured strongly. This was followed by the signing into law of the Education Act (1998) and the following year the curriculum was published (Govt. of Ireland, 1999). The 1999 curriculum

[7] See http://changeofaddresscollective.com/

[8] See https://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/event/change-of-address-free-theatre-workshop-for-young-refugees

sought to maintain the philosophical underpinnings of its predecessor (Govt. of Ireland, 1971) but was also influenced by constructivist theory and by the work of Bruner (1960) and Vygotsky (1975) in particular. The achievement of subject status for Drama marked a significant milestone in the history of curriculum development in Ireland and has generated much interest among those working in Drama Education in other jurisdictions.

John Mc Ardle, who worked as the drama consultant to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the body charged with devising the curriculum, wrote a pamphlet around the same time as the curriculum was developed entitled 'Flying on both Wings' (McArdle, 1998) wherein he put forward a theory of drama and theatre in education. Having examined classroom practice, he argued that educational drama had moved too far from theatre and lost so much of its essence that we were 'effectively flying on one wing' (McArdle, 1998, p. 4). He was critical of the way in which dramas were neatly -packaged and teacher-controlled meaning that the spontaneous nature of the subject had been lost.

The Drama Curriculum is described as being 'improvisational in nature' and as one would expect in light of Mc Ardle's comments regarding spontaneity, there is an emphasis on 'living through a story and making it up as they go along' (Govt. of Ireland, 1999, p. 6). However, the term 'process drama' is mentioned in the curriculum document also without adequate definition of/ or differentiation between the meaning of those terms.

With respect to content, the curriculum is built around elements common to theatre and drama namely 'role and character', 'time', 'place', 'action', 'significance' and 'genre' but rather than prescribing how these elements are to be explored, it states that content will be based on 'some aspect of life, on the child's experience or on the content of some other curriculum area' (p.9). On the one hand, this offers flexibility and autonomy to teachers to include subject matter of relevance to their own students and to become makers of curriculum. On the other hand, these features set it apart from other subject areas on the Primary Curriculum at that time. The particular implementation of process drama - 'drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding' as highlighted by Finneran (2016) was a further feature that placed Drama 'at odds with the rest of the primary curriculum'.

The exemplars which appear in the Teacher Guidelines document (Govt of Ireland, 1999b, pp66-91), designed to support the implementation of the curriculum, feature less 'process drama' with its characteristic conventions or strategies and more of the 'living through' type, meaning that teachers would need to be familiar with improvisation and comfortable responding in the moment. This type of teaching marked a significant departure from that which had gone before.

Writing about the phenomenon of curriculum development and change in the Irish context, Walsh (2016, p. 12) highlights the absence of the 'roadmap required to move from the contemporary practice to the policy aspiration'. The

1999 Drama Curriculum might be a case in point. Continuing professional development in the form of in-service was offered to all teachers. Drama was the last curricular subject on the programme of in-service. It comprised three days - two facilitated training days and one school-led planning day. One third of each of the two facilitated days had to be given to using drama as a methodology to advance the Irish language (Gaeilge) - a political knee-jerk reaction to a high profile report on the Irish language report at that time. This meant that less time could be given to grappling with the new emphases in the curriculum. Further, whilst in-service for other curricular areas included additional in-school support from subject-specific advisors, this was not made available for Drama. Instead, in-school support was made available for 'The Arts' generally. Given that Drama was a new addition to the curriculum and required a different kind of engagement with children, the lack of specific in-service was among the reasons making it difficult to embed in schools.

The curriculum states that 1 hour per week is to be allocated to each Arts subject, however studies have shown that Drama fares worst of the three subjects with 43% of teachers spending less than 30min per week on Drama (INTO 2009). Often this limited time is linked to teaching other subjects with drama as a methodology rather than the standalone subject that it is in the curriculum.

Governmental focus on Numeracy and Literacy caused a further pressure on time allocated to Arts Education – with Drama being the first to feel pressure. There has been some movements towards greater support for Arts Education subjects in recent years through initiatives such as the Arts in Education portal (a resource for Arts across primary and secondary with a focus on 'building a community of practice within arts and education) and Creative Schools. Creative Schools is a funded programme that aims to understand, develop and celebrate arts and creativity in schools through collaborative opportunities such as Creative Associates and Clusters. Creative Associates are arts professionals that work with schools to help them develop a creative plan for the school, connecting into existing networks and supporting the voice of young people in the decision making process.

It should be noted however, much work remains to be done in developing drama in this area specifically in supporting teachers as artists in their classrooms and as those with primary responsibility for curriculum. It is worth noting that the primary school curriculum is currently being reviewed and redeveloped and interestingly there has been a move away from prescribed curricula towards more flexibility and teacher autonomy, as evidenced in the recently published Primary Language Curriculum (Govt. of Ireland, 2018). It remains to be seen at this point what status Drama will hold in the redeveloped Curriculum. Notwithstanding the flaws in its articulation and implementation, the naming of Drama as a subject on the national Primary School Curriculum is a signifier of its value in the Irish context.

5 Performative Arts in Second Level Education

Music and Visual Art have existed as subjects in second level since the formation of a national curriculum, however Drama/Theatre has not featured. As noted by Keating 'The transition from primary to secondary school. . . .marks the cessation of all formal exposure to drama in an educational context' (2015). Learning in/through/about theatre at second level has been slow to develop for a range of reasons. As noted at Act 3 in relation to primary level the introduction of a curriculum at second level has been delayed due to an unresolved discourse as to Theatre or Drama and Process or Product. In recent years a short course in Artistic Performance has been introduced during the junior cycle of second level education. This course focuses on the 'product' of performance with the broadest possible interpretation of what Performance might be, including 'drama, music/music theatre, dance and visual art', however in the curriculum outline of what the course might look like a theatrical performance is used as a model. Across the new junior cycle curriculum the 'process' of drama has been introduced with assessment in Oral Presentation in English possible through 'performance including drama'. The potential of these changes at junior cycle to act as a spring board for further engagement at senior cycle is also visible with the National Campaign for the Arts calling for a feasibility study on the inclusion of Drama and Theatre Studies as curriculum subject (note the cover all name) as part of the 2018 budget submission. Initiatives such as the UCC based *Theatre Connects* that seek to build further networks of support for theatre across the spectrum of education are also welcome in this context.[9]

This is not to say that Theatre does not happen in Second level schools – there is a strong history of theatre production during transition year (fourth year) across schools in rural and urban settings. Transition year is framed as a 'break' between Junior and Senior cycle with a focus on students gaining life skills. Transition Year mission statement:

> To promote the personal, social, educational and vocational development of pupils and to prepare them for their role as autonomous, participate and responsible members of society. (Dept of Education 3)

That a theatre production is often part of this process points towards the potential for learning from the collaborative participation of staging a play. However the plays selected for production tend to be from the musical theatre/classic modern script repertoire with a focus on the students acting/performance skills.

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[9] https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/theatre-symposium-attendees-call-on-government-to-integrate-theatre-into-all-levels-of-educational-curriculum-849713.html

Performative Arts in Third Level Education

Theatre education in Third level in Ireland covers a diverse range of offerings from introductory Post Leaving Cert courses, for example at the Cork based CSN College and Kinsale College of Further Education which give students a general understanding of Acting based skillsets.

While the emphasis in Institutes of Technology tends to be on theatre practice, in University-based programmes there is a focus on the integration of practice and research. There are of course individual quirks to these general statements, with Lir Academy (Trinity College associated) very much focused on Acting and Technical Theatre.

Below are three sample outlines of offerings from UCC, DCU and TCD.

University College Cork — *Department of Theatre*

During the undergraduate programmes students have an opportunity to explore the rich potential of theatre as a *performative* art form. The word 'performative' is closely associated with ways of 'doing/making', and in the UCC Theatre context, especially, ways of 'creative doing and making'. Furthermore, 'performative' contains the element 'form': in most of the undergraduate modules students will engage with 'aesthetic form', including aspects of voice, rhythm, movement, presence, co-presence and space. It also contains the element 'formative': during students undergraduate years, through intensive study and performative practice, students will experience an important personal development and be equipped to become constructive, creative players in various communities.

The Theatre programmes offer three main areas of study which bring together theatre practice, theories of theatre, and texts in context. At the heart of this study is a commitment to learning through practice: students understand theatre better by getting up and doing it. This doesn't mean that the students don't engage in philosophical discussions or struggle with difficult academic arguments, but it does mean that the lecture is not used as a main mode of teaching and learning.

During their time in UCC students have opportunities to develop practical, creative, and analytical skills in drama and theatre studies, developing work on their own initiative and as part of collaborative and cooperative creative teams. Students are encouraged and supported in the development of their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. All of these skills are important in the study of theatre, but they are also transferable into many other work and social contexts.

The *MA in Theatre & Performative Practices* in UCC is designed to produce flexible, empowered theatre artists who want to develop innovative, cutting edge work. It provides a challenging and supported space for recent graduates and professional practitioners who know performance can be world-changing as it can be entertaining. Students will learn to follow their instincts and explore their unique creativity, within a rigorous critical context and research

environment.

Further offerings includes an *MA in Arts Management and Creative Producing*, developed in partnership with Cork Opera House showcasing new forms of collaboration between the academy and the profession through innovative teaching, learning and research practices. Finally the *PhD in Creative Practice*, a dynamic, practice-based doctoral programme for emerging and professional artists, whose work moves across multiple arts disciplines.

Scenario Forum

The SCENARIO Project

at UCC is a concrete example of bridge building between the performative arts and pedagogy in higher education.

It is based on the premise that the prevailing models of Business and Science urgently need to be complemented by the *Arts as a model for education*. Scenario considers especially the performative arts to be a rich source of inspiration for teachers and researchers across all academic disciplines. While the project originated in the Modern Languages it is distinctly interdisciplinary in orientation and open to research perspectives from across all academic disciplines. Scenario has grown and significantly increased its impact over the years. In its first decade more than 200 authors from over 20 different countries contributed to the journal, individual articles are accessed between 2,000 and 15,000 times.

What started out as a journal continues to evolve to now encompass a book series, a forum for conferences and symposia, an archive, and a correspondents' initiative where people from around the world report on the state of performative teaching, learning, and research in their respective countries. Through its various activities Scenario aims to promote a performative teaching, learning and research culture at all levels of education. In this context note the following recommendations, a result of the 6th Scenario Forum Symposium (21-22 September 2018) in Hanover.

Dublin City University — ***Drama Education at the Institute of Education***

Drama Education sits within the School of Arts Education and Movement at the Institute of Education, Dublin City University. There are four full-time staff on the Drama team, two part-time staff as well as visiting staff from the fields of Drama and Theatre Education. The Drama team has evolved from a rich tradition of drama education and theatre at St. Patrick's College, where many of the current national leaders in drama education first encountered national and international pioneers in the field.

All students on the *Bachelor of Education programme (B. Ed)* undertake modules in Drama Education in their first and second years. The aims of the first year module are to explore students' personal histories with drama and drama education and to introduce them to approaches to drama in the primary school context. The module combines practice and reflection as students engage with the art form of drama through their own experience. Students explore how to design drama lessons for use in early years settings. The aim in second

year is that students build upon their experiences as a participant in drama and approach the subject as a teacher who will seek to plan and facilitate drama in the classroom. Students practically explore and reflect upon issues of motivation, development and focus in drama. Students are required to present an adaptation of a published drama and facilitate elements of that drama with their peers both as an assessment and as a preparation for their classroom practice.

The B. Ed. students have the option to take a 'major specialism' in the second, third and fourth years of their programme. This is a recent, significant development whereby students undertake an additional five modules in areas including Leadership in Drama Education; Drama as a Framework for Integration and Inclusion, The Drama Continuum (Process Drama to Theatre); Drama and Embodiment and Drama and Early Childhood Education. The inclusion of Drama as part of the suite of subjects offered for major specialism is not insignificant given that the major specialism carries 25 credits (ECTS). From the year 2019 onwards, approximately twenty five students per year will graduate with a major specialism in drama.

All students undertaking the *Professional Masters in Education (PME)* take a module in Drama Education and have an option to take a minor specialism in the field.

All B. Ed and PME students undertake action research projects and Drama Education is offered as a strand on both programmes.

Students undertaking degrees in *Human Development* at DCU have the option to take Drama Education module and students on the *Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education* study Drama as part of a module on 'Play and Learning'.

Drama Education lecturing staff support students, both at Masters and Doctoral levels, undertaking research in the field of Drama/ Theatre Education, Embodiment, Early Years Education, Literacy and other related fields.

Trinity College Dublin —***Drama in Education Strand – Masters in Education***

Drama is offered in two distinct Schools at Trinity College Dublin: within the Department of Drama, in the School of Creative Arts (at undergraduate and postgraduate levels) and within the School of Education, as part of the Master in Education (M.Ed.) programme (postgraduate level only).

Within the School of Creative arts, students can choose either a *Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Theatre Studies*, or a *B.A. in Drama Studies* and another subject. In the latter option, under the heading 'What is Drama?' the website description states that "Drama and the insights from studying performance can be applied in the fields of medicine, politics, education and more".[10] This is a four-year course which requires students to combine drama with another subject (outside the Drama Department) and is housed in the Samuel Beckett Theatre. Students graduating from the Department of Drama develop

[10] https://www.tcd.ie/creative-arts/drama/undergraduate/ba-drama-other.php

a performance-based portfolio and are required to stage a number of plays, performed in the Samuel Beckett theatre, as part of their degree.

On the other hand, students graduating from the *Drama in Education M.Ed*. (School of Education) develop a practice-based portfolio and are required to design a number of lessons, using Drama in Education, facilitated in their own teaching contexts, as part of their degrees. Within the School of Education, Drama in Education is one of the eleven strands of the M.Ed., a course designed for teachers interested in researching the effects of using drama as pedagogy.

The course is internationally renowned, as it was created in collaboration with Cecily O'Neill (often associated with process drama) and Prof. David Davis, in 1998. Designed and run by Prof. Carmel O'Sullivan, it is a three-year course, including four Drama and Theatre in Education modules, one Academic Literacy module and the writing of a 20,000 words Dissertation drawing on DiE as research. It is worth noting that the Drama in Education Master attracts students from all over the world, as it is designed for long-distance education (monthly podcasts and an intensive summer school). Hence, it positions Ireland as centre-stage for training future Drama in Education practitioners.

Drama in Education is also offered within the *Professional Masters in Education* (PME) programme, as a minor elective. More recently the Language Education strand of the *Master in Education* has been offering one module titled 'Embodying Language' created by Erika Piazzoli in 2016. This particular module is for second language teachers researching the effects of embodiment for language acquisition.

Finally, Drama in Education is offered as part of the Trinity Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Rather than a subject on its own, drama is used as a means to facilitate the teaching and learning of creative arts subjects, aimed at students with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. The usefulness of drama for people with disabilities, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder, has been thoroughly documented (O'Sullivan, 2015) and has generated a number of associations, including Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland (ASPIRE), who are committed to working with children and young people through drama work.

7 Epilogue: Expected Future Developments

Future dreaming — As a formal educational discipline across all levels theatre and performative arts are still in nascent stages in Ireland. There is much possibility then to see a flourishing development across all areas and sectors where performative pedagogies offer lively modes of creative development across the curriculum while also developing a diverse set of practices and possibilities for performative arts practices which might live under the umbrella of 'theatre'. We still have work to do to shake off the 19th century legacy that lingers around the word theatre, which conjures a place and a class habitus (see Finneran regarding numbers of regular theatre attendance for example). In practice though there is a lively 'scene' of performative arts practice that is

critical of political stagnation, flexes the limits of perceived formal requirements of theatre making and continues to develop new ways of making and thinking 'theatre' for the Irish public and internationally. This ranges from grassroots work with community groups to interdisciplinary professional companies who are working in new forms including site specific work. As many artists survive juggling many roles, including making work with communities, there is often a more blended perception of arts-making (rather than a clear sense of community art vs high art, or making art for specific audiences), this is in part due to the scale of the country but also the economic reality in Ireland and the Arts Council Policies around artists in community settings, schools, and residencies. There are opportunities then to foster this integrated or blended approach further rather than making more stringent boundaries between strands and identities. We have scope to consolidate these diverse offerings within university programmes, to develop diverse curricular engagements for primary and secondary levels, to continue to engage adult audiences through enrichment and outreach programmes at all levels and to look for ways where a-typical learners can be integrated and given platforms for learning and expression across all education and public fora.

In Ireland theatre studies as a discipline has only recently emerged from within literature and languages departments and has slowly gained recognition beyond linguistic contours. Also, university and educational settings are still primarily discursively driven but we are working towards parity and recognition of other modes of knowledge that theatre and performative practices provide. The Performative Arts & Pedagogy Glossary project will contribute to articulating this aim in the longer term. It is crucial that the arts sectors form an alliance to shore up resources and value arts which are being ever denigrated in the utilitarian enterprises of corporate and neo-liberal universities and societies. One emerging platform for this is an inter-institutional organization, IMBAS, (an old Irish word meaning "creative, poetic, and performed wisdom"). As their webpage further explains:

> IMBAS facilitates communication between institutions and individuals, promoting scholarly discourse and modes of practice concerning knowledge creation through performance and performance-related creative practice. Committed to ensuring that arts practice research is fully accepted and valued as an important mainstream academic discourse in Ireland.

This and other collaborative, co-operative frameworks will be crucial to developing a thriving, diverse sector across public and civic life in Ireland and beyond.

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Figure 6: Image from UCC Final Year Students' performances 2019. Image: Marcin Lewandowski

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A Appendix - List of Associations related to Performative Pedagogy

Professional Associations

— ADEI – Association for Drama in Education in Ireland

The Association for Drama in Education in Ireland (ADEI) was founded in 1999 and is a voluntary professional organisation which aims to encourage and promote the use of Drama in Education as a methodology and as an art form; to engage in activities which promote an understanding of drama; to liaise with other drama and educational organisations in this endeavour and to provide a forum for people engaged in drama to share experiences and to support one another. A core part of the work of the organisation is to devise continuing professional development workshops for teachers and drama/theatre practitioners. The organisation has succeeded in offering about three workshops per year since the year 2000 and is therefore a well-established provider of CPD in the area of Drama and Theatre Education. The association's website (www.adei.ie) is also a source of support for teachers and practitioners. A subcommittee for curriculum matters has been established in recent years in response to the rapid changes in the Irish policy and curriculum landscape. The subcommittee completed a manifesto outlining a vision for Drama Education in 2017. The subcommittee is actively involved in advocacy work and has met with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and The Teaching Council to discuss developments in policy and curriculum. ADEI is a member of the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association (IDEA) and a proud affiliate of the International Drama in Education Research Institute (IDEIRI).

ACAE – Association for Creativity and Arts in Education

ACAE is a national network of educators concerned with the promotion of creativity and the development of the imagination through the arts. The seeds for the establishment of ACAE were sown in the dialogues and practices of a group of primary school teachers involved in teacher professional development for the arts.

ETAI - Encountering the Arts in Ireland

ETAI is an alliance of organisations and individuals whose main objective is the development, promotion and practice of the arts and education in Ireland particularly in the context of arts and education for children and young people. http://etai.ie

TYAI – Theatre for Young Audiences Ireland

TYAI is the national association representing and promoting professional organisations and individual artists whose work primarily focuses on engaging Irish children and young people through theatre. TYA Ireland provides a crucial link between members, the arts sector, the wider community and government.

www.TYAI.ie

YTI – Youth Theatre Ireland

YTI is the national development organisation for youth theatre. Established since 1980, Youth Theatre Ireland is unique in its commitment to youth-centered drama practice. At Youth Theatre Ireland, we know that youth theatre is a place to develop young artists and young citizens and we promote youth drama opportunities that focus on the artistic, personal and social development of young people. Supporting over 60 Youth Theatres across Ireland www.youththeatre.ie

CREATE - National development agency for collaborative arts in social and community contexts

Our mission is to provide advice and support services to artists and arts organisations working collaboratively with communities in social and community contexts.

CREATE supports artists across all artforms who work collaboratively with communities in different social and community contexts, be they communities of place or those brought together by interest. http://www.create-ireland.ie

Amateur Associations — ***DLI - Drama League of Ireland***

DLI aims to support, nurture and enhance the aspirations and activities of practitioners in the amateur theatre sector through education, training, advocacy and advisory services.

As the national resource service for the amateur theatre community in Ireland and as a voluntary arts organisation, the DLI seeks to o develop, maintain and improve services for voluntary arts practitioners. https://www.dli.ie

ADCI – Amateur Drama Council of Ireland

ADCI is the federation of amateur drama festivals for the whole of Ireland - North and South. A.D.C.I was founded in 1952 and has coordinated the running of preliminary drama festivals and All Ireland festivals ever since. The principal objects of the Council are to foster, develop, promote and encourage amateur drama in Ireland and to organise annually All Ireland Drama Festivals. http://adci.ie