Board of Directors
Call for Recruitment

Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company
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A bit about Echo Echo

Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company is a well established and vibrant organisation which produces a wide range of dance and movement based projects. These include classes and projects with children, older people, people with all sorts of different abilities and disabilities, youth as well as with professional artists from dance, theatre and music. It is regularly funded by Derry City and Strabane District Council, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and a number of trusts and foundations. The annual financial turnover of the company has been typically around £250,000 in most years.

Echo Echo’s annual programme includes producing new dance and movement based theatre work. The company produces work which is child and family friendly as well as work orientated towards older audiences. We tour repertoire locally and further afield including to international festivals. We also have a wide programme of participatory work that takes place both in our home studios and out in the community in schools, care homes, community centres, civic spaces and outdoor spaces. Since 2013 we have been producing the annual Echo Echo Festival of Dance and Movement. It includes work from international artists as well as from artists based on the island of Ireland and locally in the North West region.

We collaborate with a wide range of partner organisations in the education and community sectors as well as with arts organisations and artists. We put a high value on developing and sustaining deep, long-term relationships in all parts of our work and attempt to organise ourselves as ethically and co-operatively as possible.

At the core of the company is the Echo Echo Ensemble of four independent freelance artists who have made a commitment to prioritising working with each other and with Echo Echo, while also doing some work outside the company structure. The Ensemble artists maintain their professional artistic practice, creating works individually and collectively and performing regularly in Derry, in the region and internationally. The artists of the Echo Echo Ensemble also do a lot of project development, fund-raising for projects and project management in a mutually supportive relationship with the staff.

Staff
Artistic Director
Steve Batts

Company Manager
Ailbe Beirne

Technical Manager
Barry Davis

Development Officer
Anna Nolan

Board of Directors
Chair
Deirdre Gillespie

Treasurer
Cath McBride

Members
Esther Alleyne
Mandy Blinco

Ensemble Members
Associate Artistic Director
Ayesha Maile

Kelly Quigley
Tonya Sheina
Zoë Ramsey
continued...

There is a core team of four staff who have been working with the company for between nine years and over 30 years.

Artistic director Steve Batts, co-founded the company with Ursula Laeubli in Amsterdam in 1991. Ursula was co-artistic director with Steve until she died in 2011. Her profound contributions to the artistic practice and ethical foundations of the company continue to be an inspiration.

Steve fulfils the important role of linking together the artistic/creative and the managerial/administrative aspects of the company. He also teaches regularly and makes and performs work solo, with the Echo Echo Ensemble and in collaboration with other artists, internationally.

Company Manager Ailbe Beirne has worked closely with Steve Batts since 2003 to oversee the complex financial, legal and procedural processes involved with being an arts charity, as well as taking the lead in sourcing major core funding, supporting on project funding and overseeing post project reports.

Barry Davis, who joined Echo Echo in 2014, is the company’s Technical Manager and building manager. He provides practical support to all elements of the Echo Echo programme as well as contributing essential elements of the artistic programme through light and sound design, site specific projects, documentation and design of publicity.

Anna Nolan is Company Development Officer. She joined Echo Echo in 2013. Anna provides support to the Ensemble artists in project development, funding and delivery. She also leads on the company’s publicity and PR and supports the artistic director in the practical elements of festival organisation including visiting artist support.

Echo Echo has been based in Derry since 1997 after around six years of travelling for projects all over Europe with a strong focus on countries of the former Eastern Bloc. Relocating to Derry was the result of the convergence of Steve Batts’ wish to return to where he grew up, the NI Peace Process and the opportunity to become company in residence at the Playhouse, Derry. After seven years at The Playhouse the company spent a few years based in the Ebrington Centre on Derry’s Waterside and a couple in a retail unit in the city centre.

“I was also really touched by the community you’ve built in your own city. This is long hard graft but Echo Echo feels like a beacon: a hub for international artists, families, and everyday people who want to experience the tendons, ligaments, and tissue of dance and movement. That’s a really special thing!”
- artist feedback (US)
In 2013, Derry’s year as City of Culture, the company was supported by regional government funds, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and several trusts and foundations to renovate and move into its current home on Derry’s historic City Walls. To do this the company managed a capital project of over £600,000 which not only provided a home for themselves but rescued a seriously decaying building which has had all the units within it continuously and successfully occupied since then.

Echo Echo Studios comprises two dance studios, one of which is also a small scale theatre, a reception area/sitting room, office facilities, small kitchen and a theatre green room/changing room. It is beautifully designed for the purposes of the company’s work as well as being in a very special location as one of the very few buildings in Derry with direct access to the historic City Walls.

Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company approaches movement art through the broad idea of “poetic movement” rather than through any particular idiom. We are completely committed to the idea that it is people, not bodies, that dance. The language we use, and our practice as creative artists and teachers, reflects this. This rather special and unusual approach lends itself to an exemplary inclusivity and generosity without compromising artistic integrity and depth. The integration of the professional and participatory elements of our programme is essential to what we do and is underpinned by the role of the Ensemble Artists whose work both crosses that line and tends to make it fade in significance.
Where we are now

Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company is at an important stage in its history. After over thirty years of continuous development with close to ten years based in Echo Echo Studios in Waterloo House on Derry’s City Walls, the company is thinking of its next stage of development: Founding artistic director Steve Batts looks towards the final period of his role. The acquisition of Waterloo House, the company’s currently rented home, becomes a realistic objective. The wish and need to nurture a new generation of skilful, committed ensemble members emerges.

"This space is a treasure. I can honestly say that I would not have been able to create the same kind of work anywhere else. You inspire me!" – artist in residence (SWE)

A call for new voluntary board members

To help us navigate the coming period, in a social and economic context that is possibly even more insecure and unpredictable than it has been in the past decades, we are looking for new board members. We are interested in people with enthusiasm to get to know us, learn from our decades of exceptional artistic work, challenge our ideas and practice and who will support us to continue our work with the integrity and quality for which we have become known.
Who we are looking for

We are looking for new members to join our board. We don’t have any particular profile of the sort of people we are looking for. We don’t have a specific idea of background, skills or experience. Mainly we’d like people whose interests and values align with those of the company and who are interested in understanding our work and entering into it enthusiastically. We would like people who are prepared to be questioning and gently challenging in a helpful and constructive way.

Of course we are concerned that our board should have different people from different backgrounds on it so we welcome interest regardless of sex, age, racial group, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, political opinion and whether applicants have caring responsibilities.

While we want to keep the majority of our board locally based in and around Derry-Londonderry we also welcome interest from people who are based further afield and who will generally engage remotely but who are prepared to come to Derry-Londonderry in-person from time to time.

Our work involves engaging with a very broad range of organisations, individuals and processes in both private and public sectors. We deal with all of the financial and legal responsibilities of any formally constituted organisation with charitable status. We welcome interest from people with experience in any of these areas and who have the generosity of spirit to consider volunteering.

Broadly the role of board members includes:

- Helping to set and maintain the company’s mission, development plans and policies.
- Taking decisions on finance, staffing and policies in the best interests of the company and in consultation with staff, ensemble members and other stakeholders.
- Ensuring good governance through ongoing monitoring of finances and projects.
- Overseeing pastoral care, health and safety and HR issues.

Board members are asked to remain aware of and connected to the company’s ongoing programme of work and to maintain engagement with all members of the Echo Echo Ensemble and staff, individually and collectively. Developing a supportive relationship with other board members, particularly office holders (chair, treasurer) and being available for regular contact with both Company Manager and Artistic Director on practical, strategic and policy issues is important.

Full board meetings are normally held quarterly. Representatives of the staff and the Echo Echo Ensemble are normally invited to board meetings. On occasion smaller groups of board members, ensemble members and staff will form to address particular issues or projects. The company has trustee liability insurance.

The company will provide induction for new board members.

Echo Echo is a company limited by guarantee with no share capital and a charity registered in Northern Ireland. It is supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Derry City and Strabane District Council.

If you would like to find out more please contact:

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