

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION,
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE, LIMERICK



Theatre artist in residence Liam McCarthy

Report AY2022/23



Dr Dorothy Morrissey (Residency Lead) and Liam McCarthy (Theatre Artist in Residence)



Liam McCarthy, MIC Theatre Artist in Residence 2022/23

1. Background

In September 2022, the Department of Arts Education and Physical Education (AEPE) was delighted to welcome theatre maker Liam McCarthy as MIC Theatre Artist in Residence. The residency was co-funded by the Arts Council via Young People Children and Education (YPCE) and MIC for a period of one academic year. Throughout the term of his residency Liam played a vital role in the artistic and cultural life of the College and its environs.



The Arts Council's YPCE residencies support artists to spend an academic year in residence in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) that provides 1) initial teacher education programmes and/or 2) a recognised qualification in early childhood education and care. YPCE residencies aim to provide opportunities for artists to develop their skills in education settings while simultaneously providing opportunities for education lecturers, future teachers and future early childhood educators to engage with practising artists.

At local level, Liam's residency has involved close collaboration with MIC's on-campus 510-seat theatre: Lime Tree Theatre. (Lime Tree staff also manage a 220-seat city centre theatre:

Belltable.) Serendipitously, Liam's appointment as MIC Theatre Artist in Residence coincided with his curatorship of Lime Tree's annual Children's Festival: Bualadh Bos.



The residency was located within MIC's Department of Arts Education and Physical Education (AEPE) and was managed and led by AEPE Lecturer in Drama Education, Dr Dorothy Morrissey.

Liam's residency, in alignment with the aims of YPCE, was designed to engage primarily with initial teacher education students (undergraduate and postgraduate) as part of their drama education programmes. Additionally, it was designed to engage with Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) students and to engage more broadly with:

- the MIC staff and student community
- families and schools in the Limerick region.

As part of the residency, Liam worked on *Fergal*, a show for young audiences, which he both directed and co-created. This show had its world premiere at Belltable in October 2022 at Bualadh Bos Children's Festival.

At the outset, Liam and the residency lead drew up a provisional schedule of projects and events for the year. This schedule was sufficiently flexible to accommodate input from members of AEPE, who were invited to contribute at the beginning of each semester. This

flexibility also ensured that the schedule remained responsive to inputs or opportunities that arose over the course of the residency.

2. Activities, projects and events

This section of the report outlines the specific projects in which Liam was involved.

2.1 Semester one

2.1.1 *Unhappy Endings?*

In semester one, Liam produced a pop-up story telling event (*Unhappy Endings?**) which was performed at Lime Tree on 12th October, as part of Bualadh Bos Children's Festival. In this event, children from a local school, initial teacher education students on MIC's Professional Master of Education Primary Teaching (PME) programme, and students on MIC's BA in Contemporary and Applied Theatre Studies (BACATS) programme, performed alongside each other in a story narrated by BACATS student Fiona Hogan. The event involved the full PME 2 cohort (65 students), fourth and fifth class pupils from Limerick School Project (60 pupils) and the full BACATS 2 cohort (9 students). Liam worked with a project team comprising Dr Fiona McDonagh (Lecturer in Drama and Theatre Studies), who was the artistic lead, Dr Dorothy Morrissey, Dr Ailbhe Kenny (Senior Lecturer in Music Education) and Enda Griffin (PhD candidate, AEPE Departmental Assistant and visual artist).



**Unhappy Endings?* was adapted by Dr Dorothy Morrissey from *The Lost Happy Endings* by Carol Ann Duffy and Jane Ray, with the permission of the publishers. Copyright © Carol Ann Duffy. Reproduced by permission of the author c/o Rogers, Coleridge & White.

The event was embedded in the PME 2 Arts Education module, which was taught by Dr Dorothy Morrissey, Dr Julie Brazil and Noel Lennon. The value to the PME students of participating in the pop-up storytelling event is reflected in the following comments:

'Gave us as teachers an example of how to effectively produce a drama/play and have the children involved.'

'It was nice to see a see a story performance come to life. I enjoyed the children's participation in the performance and watching their excitement at being involved in the story telling. I look forward to using this style of storytelling performance with children in the classroom.'

'It was great to see the process of bringing a book to life in drama from start to finish and to see the children's actions.'

'Enabled hands on learning and focus on storytelling which can be used in the classroom.'

'Great to see how to involve children in the performance.'

'It was great to see how a performance could be staged and how to integrate different groups.'



Teachers also commented favourably on the event and the children's participation in it:

'We thought the *Unhappy Endings* performance was fantastic. It was a great opportunity for the children to work collaboratively and to think outside the box. The MIC students were excellent. The activities organised were age-appropriate and really facilitated the children in thinking creatively. The fact that they got to perform in the Lime Tree was an added bonus.'

'Both the process and the performance were fantastic opportunities for the children ... Even the children that I would have thought might lack confidence were fully involved in the process ... The performance on stage was a very exciting experience for the children. They loved getting involved in the set design before the performance. They also really enjoyed performing with the college students and they had a big sense of pride in their own performances on the day.'



This project was shortlisted for the 2023 Education Awards in the Best Community Collaboration category.

2.1.2 Children and families

In Liam's dual role as MIC Artist in Residence and Curator of Bualadh Bos, he curated an MIC/Bualadh Bos Family Day, which was held on campus on 8 October. This event comprised a circus performance attended by 100 people, circus skill workshops, two performances of a

show for young audiences which was attended by approximately 300 – including migrant families from Ukraine (via Doras) – and a human library series of drop-in sessions with artists of different disciplines, including drag artist Ben Panthera, soprano Triona Walsh, Polish theatre artist Justyna Cwojdsinska and visual artist Emma Fisher.



Liam also partnered with MIC's Áine Lyne, Project Director, MIC's Embracing Diversity Nurturing Integration Project (EDNIP) to offer tickets to shows, and follow-up workshops, to hundreds of children in Limerick's city centre schools throughout Bualadh Bos. This meant that children in schools who are part of the Government of Ireland's Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme formed a large part of the Bualadh Bos school audience/participation in 2022.



2.1.3 Visiting scholar and theatre artist

Liam played a key role in the organisation of a visit to MIC by Dr Tetsuro Shigematsu Creative Director, Research-based Theatre Lab, University of British Columbia. Dr Shigematsu performed his solo theatrical work *Empire of the Son* on Lime Tree stage, and Liam co-chaired a post-show talkback with an audience comprised of MIC staff and students.



Liam also arranged for Dr Shigematsu to facilitate a workshop (in which he performed extracts from *Empire of the Son*) for second-level students at Thomond Community College as part of Bualadh Bos Children's Festival on Tour.



2.1.4 Fergal

One of the aims of the YPCE residencies is to provide opportunities for artists to develop their skills in education settings. In semester one, Liam worked on *Fergal*, a show for young audiences, which he both directed and co-created. The residency enabled Liam (and his creative team) to obtain feedback on the work in progress from children in schools. These feedback sessions were facilitated by the residency lead and were invaluable to the creative team.



Fergal had its world premiere at Belltable in October 2022 as part of Bualadh Bos. Such was the success of the show that Liam has received a number of invitations to tour *Fergal* nationally and internationally.



Fergal was attended by BEd 3 (drama education elective) students and BACATS students who were co-participating in a module on Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA). Afterwards, the creative team facilitated a post-show talkback with these students, 14 of whom were BEd3 students and eight of whom were BACATS students.

2.1.5 Project funding award

In semester one too, Liam collaborated with the residency lead to submit an application for a MIC Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism (EDII) Project Award to fund an intercultural arts day (Arts for All Day) at MIC in March 2023. The application was successful and Liam and Dorothy were awarded 3,000 euro for the event.

2.2 Semester two

2.2.1 Arts for All Day

Liam was the Programme Manager for MIC Arts for All Day, which was held on 28 March 2023. The anticipated outcomes of the Day (which formed part of Limerick's Lifelong Learning Festival) were to enable the MIC community and the general public to:

- Appreciate diversity within the arts
- Gain new insights into diversity by engaging with diverse artists
- Gain new insights into EDII related issues, particularly issues related to race, culture, gender and family by engaging with diverse artists and art forms
- Engage in dialogue around EDII issues as they relate to the arts and beyond.

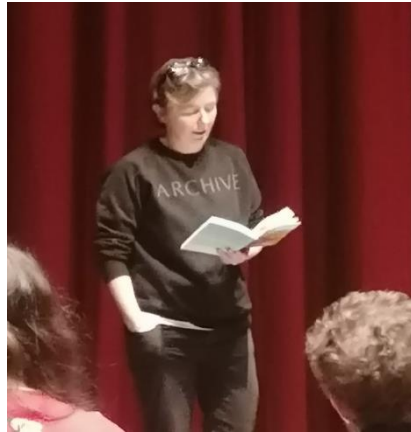
As Programme Manager, Liam began working on the Arts for All Day at the beginning of semester two. An open call for participation was issued to the College community in early January. The response was very positive and the Day comprised 12 events, which were led by College staff, students, and professional artists. The events included visual art exhibitions and workshops, a philosophy café, a lecture by leading Irish researchers on far-right anti-immigration activity on social media, a lunch-time music event, live poetry and theatre performances at Lime Tree, a drumming workshop, and an open rehearsal and play-along with MIC BEd3 elective (instrumental music leadership) students. The programme also included two closed events: an immersive, storytelling event for children from a local school with expert storyteller Sinéad O'Brien and a visual art workshop involving MIC students and

service users of V.O.I.C.E. (Vision of Community Inclusion and Equality) HSE Disability Services, Limerick, led by MIC PhD candidate, Enda Griffin. (See Appendix 1 for complete Arts for All Day programme)

MIC Arts for All Day 2023 in photographs







2.2.2 Mary I Dramatic Arts Society (MIDAS)

Liam was script advisor for the student-led MIDAS musical MIDAS-Upstaged, which was performed at Lime Tree Theatre on 22 & 23 March.



MIDAS-Upstaged involved BEd and BA students and won best society event at the BIC Student Awards. (MIDAS also won the best society award.)



2.2.3 Project grant

In semester two, Liam collaborated with Lime Tree Theatre to submit an application to Limerick City and County Council for a Creative Ireland Made in Limerick Grant on behalf of the *Unhappy Endings?* project team. The application was successful and the team was awarded 4,000 euro. This money will be used to extend the *Unhappy Endings?* (renamed as *Jub's story*) project to ten primary school classes in the 2023/24 Academic Year. The team is currently working on a summer course for the class teachers who will be involved. This course has been approved by the Department of Education and will be held, in association with MIC's EDNIP and MIC's Director of Continuing Professional Development Dr Cathal de Paor, at MIC and Lime Tree Theatre in July 2023.

Appendix one

ARTS FOR ALL

MIC Intercultural Arts Day
TUESDAY 28TH MARCH

9.30-11.30am
G23

DROP IN GLASS MAKING WORKSHOP
Niall Quinn - Department of Arts Education & Physical Education

PHILOSOPHY CAFÉ
GLOBAL JUSTICE, SOLIDARITY, & HOPE
Dr Daniel Vázquez- Department of Philosophy
Brief presentation & round-table discussion on three related topics: philosophy of art and the fight for justice and solidarity through artistic expression.

10.30-11.30am
G08





THE UNKNOWABLE OTHER
Exploring asylum seeker identity through arts-based research- A participatory workshop and exhibition
Enda Griffin - Department of Arts Education & Physical Education

11.30 -12.30pm
G10

RESEARCHING AND CONFRONTING FAR RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM IN IRELAND
Dr Marcus Free - Department of Media & Communication Studies Department
This public lecture brings together leading Irish researchers on far-right anti-immigration activity via social media and its weaponising of inadequacies in housing and services provision in Ireland in street protests.

12- 2pm
G08

12-3pm
G23

A CONSTELLATION OF FABLES: MAKING ART DROP IN VISUAL ART WORKSHOP
Dr Tanya Power & Shelia Richardson- Department of Arts Education & Physical Education
The workshop uses arts-based methods to explore generating speculative fables for a multispecies ecological future.





SEISIÚN CEOL/ MUSIC SESSION LE NEASA NIC ÍOMHAIR AGUS A CAIRDE
Dr Caitriona Breathnach, Oifigeach na Gaeilge

1-2pm
Tara Forum

LUNCHTIME MUSIC EVENT

SHARING FROM THE SONG SEEKING PROJECT
Dr Ailbhe Kenny - Department of Arts Education & Physical Education in association with Sing Ireland





POETRY PERFORMANCE
Dr Lauren McNamara - International Office
This event will showcase top Irish poets performing their work. See some of the finest contemporary writers from around the country will showcase their work for a live audience.

LIVE POETRY & THEATRE PERFORMANCE

2.30-3.30pm
Lime Tree Stage

THEATRE PERFORMANCE *West*, by Ursula Rani Sarma
Dr David Clare -Drama & Theatre Studies
One-act, one-person monologue play that Sarma, an Indian-Irish playwright from Co. Clare, wrote to reflect the homesickness for Ireland she was feeling while stuck in England during the first lockdown in 2020. This piece is directed by Dr David Clare, with MIC BA CATS alumnus James Corr in the starring role.



Musical Arrangements and Improvisation
Dr Maria Varvarigou & Dr Gwen Moore -Department of Arts Education & Physical Education
Open Rehearsal & Play Along: Students of the Instrumental Music Leadership modules will share musical arrangements and compositions that they have been creating over the semester. The audience are invited to play along!

4-5pm
G08

Drumming Workshop
Marie Edmonds- Mary Immaculate College
Join us for an exciting evening of rhythm, connection, and fun. This workshop is open to all skill levels and no prior experience is necessary. Drums and percussion instruments are provided, but feel free to bring your own!

6-8pm
Halla



An Sli
Tara Building

Ireland: Landscapes, Nature and Legends Visual Art Exhibition
Sheila O Callaghan- Education Office

Drawing Ourselves
Enda Griffin - Department of Arts Education & Physical Education
Visual Art workshop with service users of V.O.I.C.E (Vision of Inclusion, Community and Equality) service - HSE Disability Services, Limerick and MIC students.

CLOSED EVENTS

School workshop
Sinéad O'Brien- Storyteller
Wandering Stories is an immersive storytelling event, facilitated by expert storyteller Sinéad O'Brien. Children will be treated to tales from the Irish folklore canon, before being invited to build their own stories themselves.





