

2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT

Hydaman Ammanford Miners Theatre

CREU CYMGRU
FEL GWYBODAETH
OR WYBODAETH

Strengthening the performing arts in Wales

Creu
Cymru



Hello! / Shwmae!

Hello and welcome to our annual report for 2021/22.

The second year of the Pandemic was extremely challenging for our sector, but the theatres, freelancers and producing companies around Wales continued to present, produce and create outstanding work and support their local communities.

At Creu Cymru we did everything in our power to support the performing arts community to meet the challenges of Covid-19 and to respond to the needs of members.

I'm grateful to members who renewed their membership this year and to those who have joined us. As a member-led organisation I'm always open to feedback and thoughts on how we can improve your membership offer so please do get in touch.

Thanks to Yvonne, Megan and all the freelance staff who we've worked with this year.

There are exciting plans in the years to come. I look forward to working with you on these projects and supporting you all to enhance the performing arts sector in Wales.



Louise Miles-Payne
Director

The year under review has continued to offer challenge to the sector that we support in Wales.

Building back from the pandemic continues to be difficult, with audiences not up to pre-pandemic numbers for most, a clear talent drain taking place to other industries, and core staff of many live performance venues and companies under strain. In addition to this there is now the increasing concern, and impact, of the cost-of-living crisis, and the potential for expenditure to increase, and income to decrease. These challenges are real and offer serious risk to our precious sector in Wales.

Creu Cymru continue to support its members in as many ways as possible. This often manifests in training programmes and discussion groups based on needs and requests from members, and as trustees it is reassuring that Louise and her team continue to offer high quality support for the performing arts in Wales.

Following Creu Cymru's previously documented change process, this is the first financial year where our new membership model has been implemented. We are pleased, given the challenging backdrop, that venue members have been so supportive of the change in pricing policy that was so acutely needed to ensure a fit for purpose financial model, and that our opening up of the membership beyond just venues and into producing companies, and individuals, has proved so successful.

I'm confident about the future of Creu Cymru, and believe that having had strategic support from Arts Council of Wales to deliver our significant change programme, and alongside the success of *hynt* - which is now being modelled for a UK wide delivery due to its success in Wales - that we have now become an extremely relevant, well thought of, and important organisation. One that offers high level advocacy and support for the sector in Wales.

Liam Evans-Ford
Chair

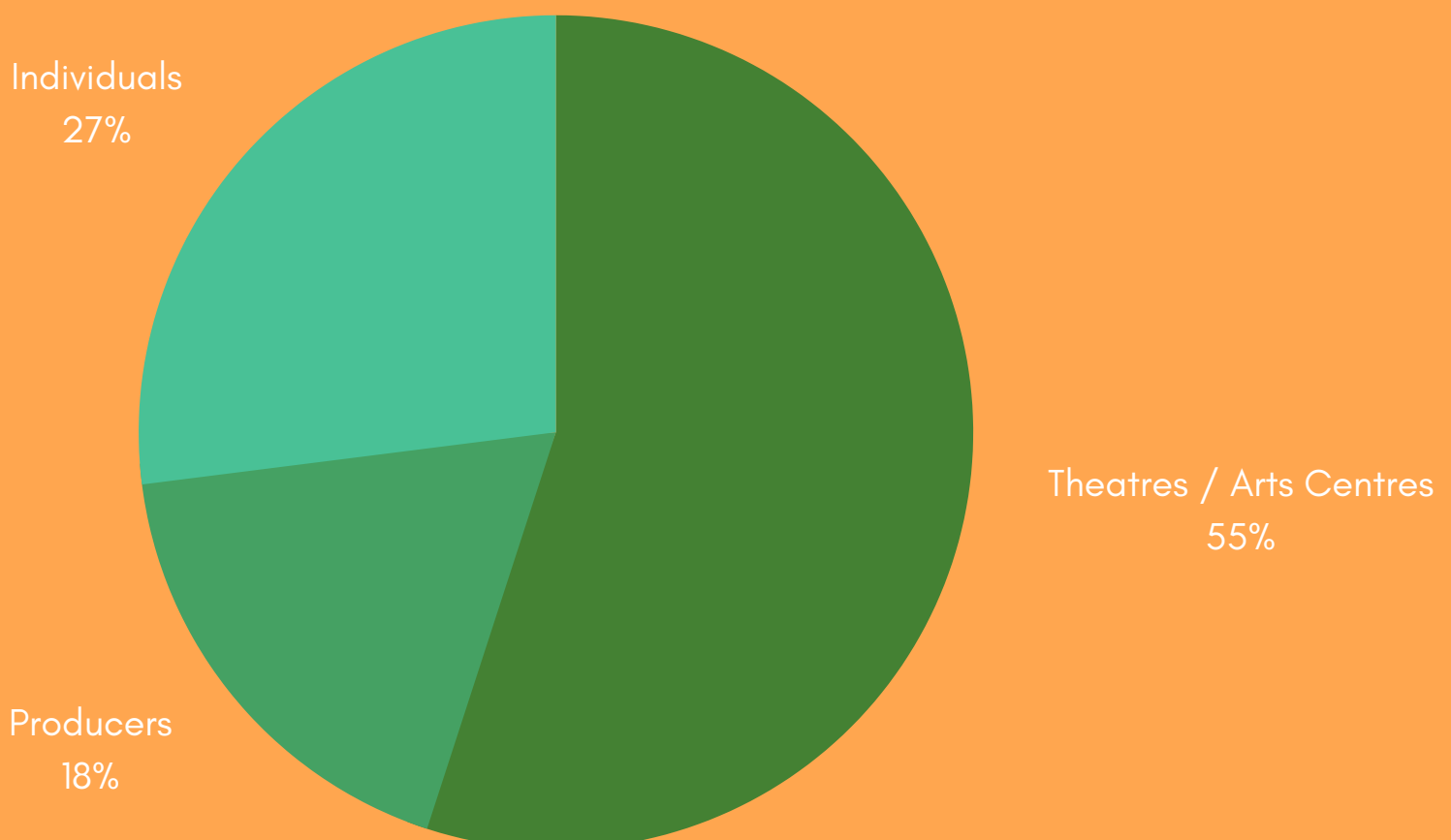


Who are we?

Creu Cymru champions Wales' vibrant sector of performing arts; connecting people, audiences and communities.

Our membership forms a collaborative network; with a strengthened and unified voice that we project and advocate on behalf of to public governing bodies, ensuring vital industry representation and influencing positive change.

Creu Cymru supports venues, companies and individuals in progressive growth strategies. Our Go & See opportunities, specialist training and toolkit resources develop the collective skills and experience of our creative workforces. This ensures that programming across the sector continues to evolve with a focus on equality, relevance and inclusion for new and diverse audiences.



Our Vision / To be a vibrant and leading network of performing arts professionals from across Wales. This network will further develop and promote the value and recognition of the importance of the arts to communities by connecting people, championing ideas, the growth of leadership and by developing a diverse and engaged membership.

Our Purpose / We aim to achieve our vision through our focus in three key areas:

Champion

We aim to communicate the value of performing arts in Wales. We identify members' key issues and set the agenda to progress those issues, both independently and through collaborative action with strategic allies. We represent the value of our members, and promote the value they contribute to community well-being and cultural identity.

- Build the network and mutual respect, and develop best practice, for performing arts presenting.
- Promote and showcase Welsh performing arts.
- Be a valued and respected authority for the subsidised performing arts sector.
- Providing outstanding artistic experiences and supporting members to be businesses, making significant contributions to the economy.

Connect

We connect performance makers and presenters to create shared understanding, collective impact and mutually beneficial outcomes that support and extend the presentation and mobility of performing arts activity.

- Driving innovation within the industry, with business models that enable artistic risk-taking.
- Be a valued and respected authority for the subsidised performing arts sector.
- Be a strong and sustainable organisation.

Evolve

We develop schemes to support enhance the skills and experience of the existing workforce, and enable those new to the sector to identify pathways into the industry. We aim to improve sector equality and diversity to ensure the development of a broad and representative range of content producers, and the production of work that is relevant to new and diverse audiences.

- Working with members to give audiences a sense of place, embracing everyone regardless of language, background, or heritage.
- Working with members to maximise social impact and community cohesion through the breadth of their activities and depth of engagement.
- Providing safe spaces for the development of artists and companies, encouraging and supporting artist experimentation and development.
- Supporting members to be diverse, vibrant environments and that reflect their audiences within the makeup of the staff.

2021/22 ACHIEVEMENTS

75%

GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP

We've gone from 40 to 73
members

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Following on from the working groups created during the Pandemic we revised our meetings looking at regularity, topics and whether it would take place online or in person.

Meeting Descriptions

Technical / Operations (twice a year, online)

To share best practice, latest developments in the sector, could have themed topics such as Covid-safe procedures or sustainability.

Conference (once a year, in person)

A networking and thought engaging event to connect members and discuss topics of interest.

AGM (once a year, online)

Annual General Meeting to report on progress of organisation and vote on matters such as trustees.

Marketing and Communications (twice a year, online)

To share best practice, latest developments in the sector, could have themed topics such as welcoming back audiences post Covid or shared marketing campaigns.

Venue meeting (twice a year, online)

To discuss venue specific issues that may have arisen from other networking meetings or through general discussions. To share potential work to be programmed, toured or seen.

Producers meeting (twice a year, online)

To discuss producer specific issues that may have arisen from other networking meetings or through general discussions.

Regional Networking Meetings (one meeting per region, starting online and moving to face to face)

To build on the work of the North Wales Consortium by opening out to the other regions.

North Wales

West / Mid Wales

South Wales

To work with regional members on joint initiatives and sharings.

Hynt symposium (once a year, in person)

To share best practice for hynt venues members, hearing from experts, members, those with lived experience.

Member meeting (once a year, online)

Introduction to new members and plans for the following year.

We also ran some ad hoc meetings in response to changing circumstances around the Covid-19 Pandemic. These including member briefings and consultations.

237 members attended 22 meetings.

We hosted five cafes on the topics of the Cultural Contract – Growth potential, Workforce and Board Diversity, Fair Pay, Progress in Lowering Carbon Footprint and Promotion of health. We invited experts in each of the areas to speak and answer questions. This included Inc Arts, Shelter Cymru, Creative Freedom, Museum Detox, Stonewall Cymru, Disability Wales, Culture&, Chwarae Teg, Wales TUC Cymru, Jerwood Arts, Cynnal Cymru, Theatres Trust, Julie's Bicycle, Bangor University, Backstage Niche, NTW, Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru, Indigo and Brixton House.

ADVOCACY

We have presented at the AMA Conference, From Access to Inclusion and What Next? Cymru.

We have represented members at regular meetings with Welsh Government, in particular around Covid restrictions and regulations. This resulted in:

- Reclassification from events to entertainment meaning theatres were in the same category as cinemas and had greater capacities to operate.
- Clarification on guidance
- Information passed directly from WG to members
- Distribution of guidance
- Lobbying for further financial support
- Consulted on new Event Wales strategy

We also presented evidence to Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee as part of its one day inquiry into arts and the creative industries.

We have attended round table meetings with DCMS, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Theatre and Louise sits on the UK Theatre Board

Hynt Joined:

Audience Access Alliance

Hynt joined Audience Access Alliance, a cross-sector group of 13 UK wide organisations / networks and two supporting Sector Champions.

PRESS

Our staff, board and members have been interviewed about issues facing the sector and based on campaigns we have created.

We have been featured in the Western Mail, WM Magazine, BBC One Wales News, ITV Wales News, The Stage, Arts Professional, S4C, Golwg, BBC Radio Wales Arts Show and Breakfast Show, Arts Scene in Wales and Get the Chance.

TRAINING

We have provided training for members and non-members including Resilience for Leaders, Mental Health First Aid, Restorative Practice, Unconscious Bias, Policy Surgery and Allyship in the Workplace.

HYNT

On behalf of the Arts Council of Wales, Creu Cymru also manages “hynt”, ACW’s national card access scheme supporting the development of accessibility and inclusive arts practice for audiences across Wales.

There are 22,157 hynt members and 40 hynt venues, with the most recent venue member Swansea Arena.

Accessible Reopening Checklist

In June 2021 hynt, with the Audience Access Alliance, launched the Accessible Reopening Checklist. This was designed to be a practical checklist for cross-sector organisations to ensure that reopening plans post lockdowns were:

- welcoming back everyone
- giving information for people to plan their visits
- that accessibility is considered at every decision-making stage.

Connect and Flourish: Breaking the Box

hynt was part of a project, Breaking the Box, on which Taking Flight Theatre Company were the lead applicant and supported by the Arts Council of Wales innovative Connect & Flourish fund.

Breaking the Box aims to develop a network of inclusive, accessible venues in Wales that are confident and supported in welcoming diverse artists, backstage crew and administrators, as well as audiences. The project offers training and support for an emerging Deaf and disabled theatre workforce. Identifying a benchmark for Wales in terms of where we’re at with inclusive practice and access, this project will reimagine the creative workforce.

Three Early Career Creatives were successful following interview, with all who applied being offered masterclasses. Emily Rose, a Welsh deaf artist and Mason-Lima Jones, a postgraduate textile artist, both from Cardiff, and Amy Warrington, a deaf writer from Caernarfon.

Project Partners: Taking Flight Theatre Company, Disability Arts Cymru, Hynt, Carmarthenshire Theatres, RCT Theatres and Pontio.

HYNT

Symposium

The hynt symposium took place online in November.

The speakers at the hynt Symposium: Act 1 were:

- Andrew Ogun, Agent for Change, Arts Council of Wales
- Ben Pettit-Wade, Artistic Director, Hijinx

Hynt Symposium: Act 2 was a series of pre-recorded video sessions featuring:

- Richie Turner presenting findings of the recent Widening Engagement work.
- Jacob Adams from Attitude is Everything updating us on their current projects.
- Tafsila Kahn talking about her services through Blindspot Consultancy including training and Audio Description.
- Osian Gwynn gave the venue perspective of the Connect and Flourish project Breaking the Box.

The Audience Agency

The Audience Agency undertook research on hynt. hynt supported Nancy Sherterline at the Audience Agency with information about which venues are participating and have made introductions with The Card Network to talk directly about the dataset. The first stage of work was analysis of the existing cardholder dataset but the development team planned a second stage involving the extraction and analysis of hynt scheme data into the Audience Finder dataset.

Other

A UK-Wide Scheme is on the horizon, with DCMS have given ACE funding to make a national access scheme a reality. 2023/24 is likely to be the launch of the UK national scheme.

Diverse Cymru continued as Creu Cymru's partner on hynt.

Limegreentangerine supported hynt with web developments.

PARTNERSHIPS

We work with a variety of partners to deliver our services for members:

Inc Arts

Everyday Racism

The Other Box

Community Leisure UK

Federation of Scottish Theatre

Theatres Trust

Theatre and Dance NI

UK Theatre

Audience Access Alliance

Diverse Cymru

WCVA

ABTT

One Dance UK

Arts Council of Wales

Welsh Government

Ffilm Cymru

Musicians Union

house

Deryn

Richard Newton Consulting

Articulture

Tŷ Cerdd

Producers Place

WG Events Advisory Group

Cultural Freelancers Wales

Bectu

AMA

Why be a member?

In addition to helping transform the Welsh performing arts sector, your membership provides:

- Access to skills, knowledge and the confidence to improve individual and organisation practice and advocacy.
 - Strong connections in a national network.
- Direct access to programmers and programming opportunities.
- Support from a respected and valued authority, with a robust and digestible performing arts sector knowledge base.
 - The ability to influence the influencers.

What we can offer:

Networking opportunities

Advice from our staff

Highly subsidised high quality training

Go & See Visits

Annual Conference

Access to experts

Collaboration and shared learning

Opportunities to promote your work and job vacancies

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Testimonials

"The help and support of Creu Cymru through the COVID period has been invaluable with focus groups, grants and site visits".

Rhian Dafydd, Business and Marketing Manager, Theatr Felinfach

"Creu Cymru puts on some great courses and provides good links which is beneficial to any organisation. Any links to other venues or guidance especially during these times, is much appreciated and their team is fab."

Tracey Bishop, Front of House Manager, RWCMD

"It's great to be part of Creu Cymru and to be able to network with others within the arts sector in Wales. The training sessions provided are always of high quality and on relevant and contemporary subjects. I highly recommend organisations and individuals involved in arts sector in Wales to join and take advantage of the resources and training available from Creu Cymru as well as its fantastic networking opportunities".

Aled Rees, Artistic Administrator / Gweinyddwr Artistig, Theatr Iolo

"I'm really grateful to Creu Cymru for organising such a useful training session, and I really couldn't recommend this particular one highly enough. When resources are so stretched having such a level of legwork done so thoroughly is a massive help".

Tasmin Davies, Theatr Mwldan