



Irish Association of Youth Orchestras
Strategic Plan 2022—2024



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A Message from our Chairperson, Laoise O'Brien

I am honoured to have been elected as chair of the board of the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras and look forward to working alongside my colleagues on the board and with the staff of IAYO as we deliver our new strategic plan.

I would like to thank our outgoing chair, Clare Daly, for the invaluable work she has done on behalf of the organisation over the last five years. Our new strategic plan was born out of her leadership, commitment and passion and I would like to acknowledge the incredible work that Clare, our CEO, Allin Gray, and the board have done in planning for the future of the organisation. It is only fitting that the foreword should be in Clare's own words.

Laoise O'Brien



A Message from Clare Daly - Chairperson (2018-2022)

It is a privilege to introduce a plan for the next three years that will take us through to our 30th anniversary and continue to strengthen IAYO and support the extraordinary work of our members. The last 30 years has seen the landscape change so much in Ireland for young orchestral musicians, thankfully mostly in very positive ways, and in particular it has seen a steady increase in opportunities for participation in orchestral music throughout the country outside of urban centres. We hope the next 30 years will see that access expanding significantly as part of our vision of an Ireland where all young people have the opportunity to experience the joy of ensemble music-making.

This plan was born out of a systematic review of IAYO's mission and aims. The review largely confirmed that the aims mission stands as originally devised nearly 30 years ago. It a testament to what we do, and have done, and our important role in supporting our members and young players throughout Ireland. This plan is ambitious in expanding the scope of our aims and it envisages an IAYO that mirrors the society that we now live in - one that has changed so much since 1994. It is imperative that we celebrate, highlight and embrace the ways we can reflect the diverse and rich nature of modern Irish society and continue working with our members, stakeholders and partners to enable as many young people as possible to play in a youth orchestra. We also acknowledge that sustainability has to be front and centre and has to play a role in everything we do and, indeed, we aspire to take a lead for our members in this area. Finally, we want to bring the voice of young people to the fore in everything we do and in turn support IAYO members to ensure that young players, as the beneficiaries of our work, can shape it too. Indeed, there is a huge opportunity for our young players to guide us in our journey to bring forward an agenda that is critical and relevant to the next generation - an agenda that will inevitably include equality of access to music as well as building a sustainable model for IAYO and our members.

Our last plan looked inwards and, building on the success of that, we now look outwards to bring in the prevalent themes that must influence what we do, to forge an even more robust and responsive organisation for all youth orchestras and young musicians on this island. We wish to thank the Arts Council for their continued support. Their commitment to resource us to take these new crucial steps forward is a cornerstone of this plan, a plan which will likely broadly set our agenda for the next decade.

Clare Daly

Our Mission

The Irish Association of Youth Orchestras promotes and fosters the development of youth orchestras in Ireland.

Our Vision

We envision an Ireland where all young people have the opportunity to experience the joy of ensemble music-making.

Our Aims

- Build and strengthen the community of youth orchestras.
- Provide and facilitate advice and information for youth orchestras.
- Foster excellence through provision of training and resources.
- Promote best practice artistically and in working with young people.
- Offer and facilitate performance and collaboration opportunities.
- Present excellence in the youth orchestra movement to a wider and more diverse public.
- Encourage collaboration between all stakeholders in the development of youth orchestras.
- Act as a connection between youth orchestras in Ireland and the movement internationally.



Our Values

Community: We value creative communal expression and unite all our stakeholders in the joy of music by creating spaces for networking, peer-learning and shared musical experiences at every opportunity.

Diversity: We welcome all people and embrace the diversity of contemporary Ireland.

Enjoyment: We place fun, personal fulfilment and celebration at the core of all our work.

Equality: We believe that all young people should have the opportunity to practice musicianship and access instrumental training.

Excellence: We encourage every young person to reach the highest potential that they aspire and commit to.

Integrity: We are transparent, honest and professional in all aspects of our work. We treat all people with respect, dignity and courtesy at all times.

Partnership: We value partnership with like-minded organisations that share or embody our values.

Sustainability: We value environmental sustainability and will reflect sustainable practices in our work.

Youth Participation: We put young people at the centre of our work, striving towards a partnership with them in our activities.



Our Strategic Goals for 2022—2024

Enhance and Develop Governance

Excellence in governance will enable excellence in all aspects of the work of the Irish Association of Youth Orchestras. We will enhance governance by ensuring that the board, board sub-committees, policies, procedures and systems are all fit for purpose and operate in line with best practice.

We will:

- 1.1 Put in place written role descriptions for board members and set out clearly what is expected from each board member in terms of time commitment and level of engagement;
- 1.2 Put a plan in place to ensure that there is quality training for all new and existing board members;
- 1.3 Identify the skills required for an effective board, assess the skills of current board members and identify any skills gaps. We will prioritise the filling of skills gaps when recruiting new board members;
- 1.4 Continue to evaluate board performance;
- 1.5 Consider equality, diversity and inclusion matters when identifying potential new board members and work towards a more diverse board membership;
- 1.6 Review whether IAYO has sub-committees appropriate to its needs and consider bringing potential new board members on to board sub-committees as a stepping-stone to full board membership;
- 1.7 Continue to regularly review IAYO's policies, procedures and systems and ensure that they are in line with best practice and compliant with all legal requirements.

Grow and Develop the Workforce

The growth and development of our workforce are a strategic priority to ensure that we continue to provide excellent services and a high-quality range of programmes to our members. We will ensure that the skills of the workforce are aligned to the developing needs of IAYO and the youth orchestra community.

We will:

- 2.1 Conduct a workforce planning exercise which will include a review of:
 - Workload and capacity;
 - Competencies, capabilities and staff skills;
 - Staff and organisational structure;
 - E-working and potential for remote working or hybrid approaches;
 - Career development opportunities;
- 2.2 Review funding mechanisms and explore options for staffing resources;
- 2.3 Prioritise and invest in IT and IT support;
- 2.4 Preserve IAYO corporate memory by capturing existing organisational knowhow and expertise, for example through documenting operational processes for events / programmes;
- 2.5 Create a new senior role to share responsibility for ensuring excellence and best practice in the delivery of IAYO's programmes.

Our Strategic Goals for 2022—2024

Continue to Deliver a High-quality and Appropriate Programme of Activities

We will continue to engage with our membership and to improve the quality of the membership experience. We will deliver excellence in our programme of services and activities for the youth orchestra community.

We will:

- 3.1 Assess and review the current activities and the annual programme of IAYO to ensure that these continue to be of high quality and relevant to our members and to young musicians and aligned with IAYO's mission, vision and aims;
- 3.2 Encourage community building and regional collaborations, for example through funding awards and sponsorship;
- 3.3 Build the membership community through networking and collaboration;
- 3.4 Consider piloting member representatives as a conduit between IAYO and its membership. These could be an effective mechanism for evaluating how IAYO is performing, increasing the visibility of IAYO at members' events, and maintaining a vibrant relationship with the membership;
- 3.5 Review and enhance membership and stakeholder evaluation systems.

Develop the Youth Approach in IAYO's Activities

The development of a youth approach will involve the incorporation of a model of youth participation that will facilitate the prioritising of young people's ideas, opinions and voices in the work of IAYO.

We will:

- 4.1 Bring youth leadership and decision-making into our board discussions as a standing agenda item;
- 4.2 Gather data on existing youth leadership best practices from within IAYO's membership and networks, both national and international. Promote this best practice among IAYO members and encourage engagement in relevant further training and development;
- 4.3 Seek funding to employ a part-time youth leadership support worker for IAYO;
- 4.4 Develop a capacity-building framework for young musicians so that they will directly inform the work of IAYO's board and staff.

Our Strategic Goals for 2022—2024

Focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Matters

Our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion matters will be an over-arching theme that will impact on all our strategic priorities.

We will:

- 5.1 Focus on equality, diversity and inclusion by bringing it into board discussions as a standing agenda item;
- 5.2 Establish a board subgroup that will drive IAYO's focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and develop and implement an IAYO Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan;
- 5.3 Gather data and review the current status of equality, diversity, and inclusion matters within IAYO, its membership and audiences;
- 5.4 Raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion matters amongst our community of members;
- 5.5 Provide guidance and support to IAYO member organisations to focus on equality, diversity and inclusion matters;
- 5.6 Explore links with organisations representing minorities and disadvantaged communities.

Embed Environmental Sustainability into all IAYO Activities

Our focus on environmental sustainability will be an over-arching theme and will be integral to our strategic priorities.

We will:

- 6.1 Bring environmental sustainability into our board discussions as a standing agenda item;
- 6.2 Establish a board subgroup that will drive IAYO's focus on environmental sustainability;
- 6.3 Evaluate the positive impacts that music-making and participation in youth orchestras can have for environmental sustainability and initiate actions to promote these impacts;
- 6.4 Evaluate the negative environmental impacts of music-making and participation in youth orchestras and initiate actions to mitigate against these impacts.





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The Irish Association of Youth Orchestras is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee registered in Ireland.

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