



Subject:	City of Music – support for Autumn Programme 2021
Date:	8 th September 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Eimear Henry, Senior Manager, Culture and Tourism

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• update Members on developments on the UNESCO City of Music designation process, strategic music development and music-based events due to happen as part of the city's recovery programme in October and November 2021.• Request that Members consider supporting events due to take place in Belfast.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the funding of £50,000 from existing departmental budgets for the Gradam Ceoil including broadcast event and local engagement programme; • Approve £15,000 from existing departmental budgets for the provision of Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries; and • Approve £15,000 to support the delivery of the NI Music Prize to incorporating the UNESCO City of Music announcement and iur music development programme.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>In March 2018, as a result of the coalescence of many conversations which were happening in the city at the same time, Council backed a proposal for the city and its partners to make an application for the endorsement of UNESCO City of Music status which became a key ambition of the city’s cultural strategy <i>A City Imagining 2020-30</i>, setting out a commitment to applying for UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership via recognition as a UNESCO City of Music in 2021. Since 2018, Council have spent three years working on music development for the city including extensive engagement with the sector and city stakeholders to co-design the UNESCO application as well as a complementary music strategy and implementation plan to support the ambitions set out for UNESCO designation. In June 2021 Belfast was officially shortlisted in the global competition for UNESCO City of Music status in 2021, the results of which will be announced mid-November 2021. This will coincide with a number of key music events for the city which we seek to support as part of our ongoing commitment to music in the city.</p>
3.2	<p>Support for these high-profile music events will contribute not only to the city’s cultural recovery but to a number of the aims set out in the Belfast Agenda and <i>A City Imagining</i> cultural strategy by contributing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An inclusive city where everyone actively participates in cultural life - A diverse city with vibrant public and cultural spaces - A city where creativity pushes boundaries - A city confident of our place in the world
3.3	<p><u>Gradam Ceoil</u> <i>Broadcast Event</i></p> <p>Gradam Ceoil is an annual awards ceremony which celebrates the best of traditional Irish music and song. It comprises a gala event as well as citywide community outreach and engagement events which help to maximise reach and impact.</p>
3.4	<p>The live coverage on TG4 provides a meaningful opportunity to showcase Belfast as a city of music, arts and culture with the event often picked up by other broadcast platforms such as PBS America</p>

and online channels. As host city, Belfast continues to work closely with the event organisers to develop deep cultural and visitor engagement opportunities. This year concludes Gradam's four-year residency in the city and plans are underway for a bursary programme for local musicians to build on its legacy by strengthening and continuing Gradam Ceoil's connection with Belfast. In 2019 the event reached 110,000 television viewers with a total of over 500,000 views including online channels.

3.5 The 2021 edition will include:

- Gradam's fourth and final year of residency in Belfast.
- Previous years the Award Ceremony and Concert was held in The Waterfront Hall but this has had to be scaled back due to ongoing Covid restrictions.
- The Award Ceremony and Concert will be recorded at The Whitla Hall the week commencing 25 October and broadcast on TG4 on Sunday 31 October and promotion through online channels.
- Six music categories will be awarded.
- Launch event will take place in Belfast on Wednesday 8 September.

3.6 *Local Programme*

In previous years the Gradam local engagement programme in Belfast centred on small scale music events and tutoring sessions at community venues. These were held in the two days leading up to the main event. With this year being Gradam's final year in Belfast, there is a focus on its legacy and how it will continue to positively impact on Belfast as a music city. The proposal for these events will include a series of special performances in venues across the city:

- Focus on all female performers who are also Gradam award recipients
- Focus on promoting regional artists
- Youth Concert tour – pop up concerts with past Gradam pupils performing in venues in Belfast such as Duncairn, Ulster Scots Centre and QUB. Potential guest performances.

3.7 *Gradam Ceoil – Bursary Programme*

Creating a legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast is a priority. Since 2017, in preparation for the arrival of Gradam Ceoil in Belfast in 2018, Red Shoe (Gradam Producer) has been building networks and partnerships with a diverse mix of cultural organisations in neighbourhoods across Belfast and has established a hub at The Duncairn.

3.8 Building on the success and impact of the programme of fringe events that animate the city around the main Gradam Ceoil event, Red Shoe, in partnership with The Duncairn and TG4, now propose to establish a music and audio-visual bursary scheme for an initial five-year period to achieve the following objectives and to contribute to Belfast's proposition to UNESCO for designation as a Music City:

- Create a practical, living legacy from Gradam Ceoil Belfast
- Develop and support the traditional music sector across the city region, and promote Belfast as a destination rich in traditional and other music
- Enrich Belfast’s offering as a creative place and as a city that fosters ideas, ambition, in ways that help our artists to build capacity and develop their work
- Recognise potential and support creative ideas, particularly among young people engaged in traditional music
- Create opportunities for young people to work and learn alongside leading figures in traditional music and in the audio-visual production sector
- Provide new kinds of creative opportunities to foster creativity in response to the needs that young people identify for themselves, for their work, and for their communities

3.9 The proposition is to create three Gradam Ceoil Belfast bursaries annually, each valued at £3,000, for the five-year period 2021-25.

3.10 The call for applications will seek proposals that are grounded in traditional music, ideally with a Belfast angle, and that can be realised as audio-visual projects such as short film, video, or other digital content. The recipients will be able to work with their ideal team of artistic and technical experts, under the guidance and mentorship of Red Shoe, thereby learning and refining additional and new transferrable skills in many aspects of audio-visual production.

3.11 The rationale for this approach is that with the increased availability and ease of access to technology today, the strategic issue is about quality, skills, training, and being able to make the best use of all the tools of audio-visual production to support creative projects based in and around traditional music.

3.12 The involvement of the delivery partners is as follows:

Red Shoe Productions: concept and project development; design and delivery in Belfast of the creative and technical supports for recipients; post-production support to bring projects to broadcast quality; joint management (with The Duncairn) of the project.

The Duncairn: concept and project development; identification and communication with target groups across the city; location and venue support; administrative support and joint management (with Red Shoe) of the project

TG4: concept and project development; broadcast platform and online dissemination of selected projects as integral element of Gradam Ceoil; recognition and promotion of the significance of the relationship with Belfast, and Belfast’s uniquely diverse musical traditions (this project is unique to Belfast).

3.13	<p>The application process for these bursaries will be designed and managed jointly by Red Shoe and The Duncairn, using an open call for expressions of interest and a scored assessment process in line with prevailing good practice. Council will be invited to sit on the assessment panel for these bursaries. The assessment of applications will be carried out by a panel comprising Red Shoe, The Duncairn, TG4, a BCC nominee and an external assessor.</p>
3.14	<p><u>NI Music Prize & UNESCO City of Music Announcement</u></p> <p>The Northern Ireland Music Prize honours and celebrates the very best of new, established and emerging Northern Irish music and is a key music event for the city of Belfast, more so than ever with the ambitions for City of Music Designation announcement coinciding with this year's ceremony . It is an annual awards night organised by the Oh Yeah Music Centre and takes place in the Ulster Hall during Sound of Belfast Festival every year. Sound of Belfast is a festival that showcases the Belfast music scene and sector with gigs, panels, talks, workshops, discussions, exhibitions, showcases and special events at various venues across Belfast.</p>
3.15	<p>The prize is a high-profile celebration of music from Northern Ireland. Four awards are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Best Album (with cash prize of £3,000), – Best Live Act (normally £1000, an alternative in 2021 due to impact on live music in 2020) – Best Newcomer (Oh Yeah Contender Award (in association with BBC cash prize of £1000) – Best Single (with cash prize of £1000 and shortlist going to public vote).
3.16	<p>The NI Music Prize was established to support the growth and build the profile of NI Music and reflect similar work and recognition of regional music in other parts of the UK and Ireland. It is a significant event and key milestone for Belfast as the regional driver for the music industry in Northern Ireland.</p>
3.17	<p><i>Plans for 2021</i></p> <p>Due to the pandemic NI Music Prize 2021 will be with an invited audience of music industry, media, nominated and shortlisted acts, stakeholders and supporters as well as a limited number of tickets going to fans or key workers. A cabaret style event on the ground floor, reducing numbers and keeping with the possibility of a more restricted event, but also elevating it to a more formal awards event for the first time. The event will take on a blended approach in terms of reaching audiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A live audience in the hall – A live stream to a wider and global audience via high quality production via YouTube. – Media interviews, podcast recordings, live streams and prerecords backstage. – There will be 5 award presentations

- Guest Presenters and speakers
- Video messages
- Performances from 3 special guest acts
- Performances from 3 or 4 shortlisted acts
- UNESCO announcement – and/or opportunity for BCC to use the platform to communicate successful UNESCO City of Music Designation, and if unsuccessful the plans to continue to support music in the city through the cultural strategy and recovery programmes.

3.18

Significance of NI Music Prize in 2021

This is an important event for music in Belfast given the impact of the Covid pandemic:

- The NI Music Prize can play a key part in the recovery of Belfast as a music city
- It will be an opportunity for the music community of Belfast to come together for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic
- It will be an important platform to recognise the resilience of the industry and how it will be part of the city's overall recovery
- It will be an investment in our world class and strong emerging diverse talent, which is becoming more varied and exciting as the city emerges from almost two years under restrictions
- It will acknowledge the challenges and recognise the role of our creative sector throughout lockdown
- Belfast will be notified of the outcome of the UNESCO City of Music bid at this time therefore this would be a potential platform for an announcement
- It will showcase our local talent through extensive online reach with a live streamed event
- It will demonstrate that Council is committed to supporting and investing in music long term

3.19

Regardless of the outcome of the bid for UNESCO designation, there is still cause for this to be a significant event with a strong message going forward – that music will be at the centre of the recovery and future of Belfast as a culturally vibrant city and that Council is committed to music in the city through delivery of *A City Imagining* and the development of a new music strategy for the city.

3.20

To complement and strengthen the initiatives and ambitions laid out in the UNESCO City of Music application officers have been working with Sound Diplomacy and the City of Music Steering Group to develop a robust Music Strategy and Recovery Plan for Belfast which includes priority actions for the music sector post-pandemic and a three-year implementation plan which will be taken back to Committee for approval in November 2021.

3.21	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The financial support requested from Belfast City Council is as follows:</p> <p>Gradam Ceoil Broadcast event and local engagement programme - £50,000</p> <p>Gradam Ceoil legacy bursaries for local musicians - £15,000</p> <p>NI Music Prize - £15,000</p> <p>These costs are to be met from existing departmental budgets allocated to music development.</p>
3.22	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Officers will work with event organisers to ensure that a wide range of groups and artists across the city are engaged with. There are no Rural Needs implications.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents attached</p>
	<p>None</p>