

Strategic consultancy brief, July 2019

Introduction

National Youth Ballet was founded in 1988 by Jill Tookey CBE, who was the driving force behind the organisation and its success for nearly 30 years. Jill died in 2016 and trustees recognised the need to professionalise to survive and thrive; a generous legacy from Jill's estate has been invested in the first stage of organisational change and development.

The trustee group has expanded to include the skills and expertise that all arts organisations now need, including not only ballet professionals, but also marketing, engagement, fundraising, HR and law. Two board members are alumni.

National Youth Ballet has an excellent track record of identifying and cultivating new talent, as well as engaging children and young people from all backgrounds. We have the ambition to expand our projects throughout the UK (we currently audition and perform in Birmingham and London) and, in time, match the profile of the National Youth Theatre and National Youth Orchestra. We believe that with a robust fundraising programme, alongside a sustainable business model incorporating additional new earned income streams, all underpinned by an appropriate infrastructure, National Youth Ballet will flourish.

2018 and 2019 have been years of transition to a fully professional operation – 2020 will continue this process of evolution: fundraising in 2018 was successful with grants received from a number of trusts and some individuals; we must build organisational capability and create long-term sustainability.

Brief

At a recent National Youth Ballet board and staff away day, we agreed three key areas on which to focus:

- identifying and fostering individual talent, including Beyond Ballet and alumni
- establishing NYB's place in, and value to, the professional dance ecology – in other words: where do participants go afterwards?
- expanding and strengthening our supply route (ie: where do our dancers come from?) and thus increasing diversity and developing new partnerships

NYB now seeks an experienced all-round freelance manager / administrator / executive director in the performing arts to support the board in a fixed-term consultancy capacity to explore these aims, comprehensively re-assess our business model and staffing structure, identify new partnerships with which the organisation can grow and progress sustainably and further develop the draft business plan (attached as Appendix 1).

The project will start as soon as possible and the brief is currently phased. We anticipate Phase I to be delivered in approximately three months of full-time work, or equivalent time-frame. Phase II can be refined as Phase I unfolds: a preliminary proposal is below.

Deliverables Phase I

- 2020 draft budget and programme
- next iteration of the business plan and concrete steps for year 1
- proposals for monetising our activities (or new strands of activity)
- proposals for increasing reach / diversity / numbers of auditions
- proposal for staffing structure, including volunteers and succession planning where necessary
- draft marketing strategy
- comprehensive competitor analysis
- brief/s for any freelancers required, ie: communications / PR
- proposals (in conjunction with artistic lead) for performance / choreographic structure

Proposed deliverables Phase II

- identify and initiate new strategic and / or income-generating partnerships with, inter alia: school partners; alumni; funding bodies: corporate sponsors, trusts and foundations, individual donors; patrons, partner organisations and other charities; Government policy-makers and local authorities
- identify means to build and develop potential revenue streams from summer school, annual performances, auditions and masterclasses
- develop and implement a coherent strategic plan for the growth and development of National Youth Ballet and ensure our economic viability
- review Mem & Arts, make proposals to put in place measures to improve corporate governance, ensuring trustees have at their disposal appropriate guidance on matters concerning compliance with its governing instrument, in accordance with Charity Commission regulations, regulatory bodies and funders
- develop and implement effective financial control and information systems that allow for efficient reporting to all stakeholders, internal and external

Requirements

- sophisticated business and strategic skills and an entrepreneurial mind-set
- financial acumen
- thorough knowledge of, and networks within, the UK dance ecology including classical ballet
- understanding of the “youth” cultural sector, vocational training and performing activity and ensembles
- experienced and proven success in leadership roles and working with boards of trustees within the charitable cultural and / or education / training sectors
- proven strategic understanding of good business and financial planning
- ability to create effective partnerships
- highly motivated independent self-starter with a strong achievement drive and commitment to meeting objectives
- excellent communication, presentation and interpersonal skills with the ability to promote National Youth Ballet to a range of audiences and debate issues convincingly internally and externally
- experience of overseeing successful, complex projects
- experience in organisational change
- ability to work with creative talent and strong personalities

Terms

Start	immediate / as soon as possible
Phase 1 delivery	approximately three months of full-time work, or an equivalent time-frame
Fee	£11,000, to be invoiced monthly and supported by time-sheets
Notice	one month on either side
Reporting	to trustees, every two weeks

Responding to the brief

2018 audited accounts and further information can be found at <https://nationalyouthballet.org/>.

Please send initial proposals to Patricia Castanha, Chair, on patricia@castanha.co.uk. These should consist of:

- your current cv
- your response to the brief, describing how your experience and skills will enable you to deliver the project (up to four sides of A4)

Both documents should be sent as pdf's. The deadline for receipt of proposals is 9 am, Monday 9th September.

First interviews are on Monday 16th September 2019. Second interviews, which may include a presentation, will be on Thursday 26th September. Meetings are in London, with a panel of trustees.

If you wish an informal conversation ahead of submitting your proposal, please email Patricia Castanha to schedule a call.

Appendix 1

National Youth Ballet

Draft Business Plan: 2019-2021 (*narrative only*)

1.1 Our Vision

Young people will create the ballet of the future.

1.2 Our Mission

National Youth Ballet provides empowering and transformational opportunities for young people to participate in, create and perform ballet. We seek to give our future generations a strong and diverse voice.

1.3 Our Principles

Our work is underpinned by a commitment to:

- Quality and excellence
- Inclusion, diversity and accessibility
- Innovation and creativity

2 Organisation Summary

The National Youth Ballet of Great Britain (NYB) was founded in 1988. It is a company limited by guarantee (Company No.: 02557811), with charitable status (Registered Charity No.: 1000932). Its work is overseen and supported by a board of non-executive trustees, and managed by a team of four part-time staff. This is supplemented by a pool of freelance staff and volunteers who help to deliver activities, particularly NYB's annual Residential Performance Company and performances.

3 Current position

NYB's annual programme is designed to develop the potential and raise the aspirations of dancers, choreographers and other artists from varied backgrounds: from those at the beginning their dance journeys to those in the earlier stages of professional careers.

3.1 Current delivery model

This comprises three key strands of activity:

Residential Performance Company

A two-week residential summer school that sees a company of over one hundred young people, aged 9-18, come together with a team of professional choreographers and teachers to learn, rehearse and perform a programme of ballet works, replicating the experience of being in a professional dance company. The young dancers experience every aspect of creating a ballet, collaborating with choreographers, musicians, designers, composers, costumiers and technicians. The summer school culminates in regional performances (currently in Birmingham) followed by a gala performance at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London. Participants are recruited from across the UK and for many the experience provides a bridge into vocational training by complementing and supporting the work of local dance schools.

Beyond Ballet

This supports emerging artists in the early stages of their professional careers, or making the transition from a dancing career to another aspect of the creative process. Aimed at graduates and early career professionals aged 18-35, Beyond Ballet offers aspiring rehearsal directors, choreographers, costume and lighting designers and musicians the chance to work in a company environment alongside established professionals. There is an open application process to join the programme; we also partner with conservatoires and higher education institutions to increase our

reach and connectivity to the wider sector. Each Beyond Ballet artist receives mentoring, shadowing opportunities and a paid role as part of the Residential Performance Company's artistic team, with their work being profiled within a professional performance context. Many artists taking part in this scheme have gone onto work in vocational schools, professional dance companies and productions across the UK including The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Rambert and Matthew Bourne's New Adventures.

Widening Participation

To support our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we deliver occasional workshops with schools and community groups, including those with disabilities, offering what is for many children their first experience of dance and creative movement.

3.2 Opportunities

Bridges between local dance schools and vocational training, and between training and a professional career, are crucial elements of the talent pipeline that will create the next generations of dancers and dance professionals. We believe NYB is the only organisation in the UK playing this bridge building role at such a high level of quality within classical ballet.

We have already engaged with young people from over 170 dance schools, and with several prominent dance companies that recognise the effective role NYB is playing in nurturing emerging choreographers and artists. There is an opportunity to build on this in order to further strengthen our place in the ballet and dance ecology.

The last decade has seen a decline in the place of dance in schools, and a corresponding decline in dance teaching experience and expertise. At the same time there has been an increasing acknowledgment of the positive contribution dance can make to help address central issues around children and young people's welfare and development, such as health and fitness, and mental health and wellbeing. NYB has the national profile, and within its artists and alumni the skills and experience, to develop engagement activities that enrich dance provision in schools and informal youth settings, and achieve positive outcomes for young people and society.

3.3 Challenges and uncertainties

For 28 years NYB was driven and led by its founder, who filled the roles of both Executive Director and Artistic Director. Her death in 2016 naturally had a major impact on the organisation. There was an acknowledgment by trustees that, not only to survive but to thrive in the future, NYB needed to establish a new professional staff team and structure, strengthen its board, and develop a new strategy and more sustainable business model.

Several new trustees (including a new Chair) have been appointed over the last two years and a new staff structure was introduced in 2018, including the appointment of a separate Executive Director post to work alongside the Artistic Director, a position created in 2016.

A priority for staff team and board is to establish a business model that can secure the organisation's artistic and financial future. 61.3% of NYB's turnover in the 2018 financial year was generated from earned income (summer school and workshop fees, performance ticket sales, etc) the remaining 38.7% from fundraising. There is limited potential to increase earned income from the current programme of activity. It is therefore necessary to evolve a programme that can increase income from both charged-for activities and services, and from charitable fundraising.

4 Strategy: 2019-21

A new three-year strategic vision has been created. Its realisation will depend on the organisation developing new approaches to:

- elements of programme delivery
- connecting and partnering with the wider dance, cultural and education sectors

- strengthening inclusion and increasing reach to young people from diverse backgrounds
- the positioning of digital as a central driver
- fundraising and income generation

This will require an investment of time and resource, particularly in the earlier stages of this three-year period, and willingness to live with a degree of uncertainty, as we lay foundations for future success and transition from the current model to a new strategy.

4.1 Overarching goals

Our strategy seeks to further realise NYB's vision and mission, and to increase the organisation's impact, through the achievement of four 'Change Goals'.

Increase diversity and access

We recognise that there is a lack of inclusion and diversity across the arts as a whole, and not least in dance and classical ballet. This has been reflected in the demographics of participants in NYB's work. We will take a pro-active approach to increasing the diversity of those who engage in our programme with regard to ethnicity, socio-economic background, Special Educational Needs & Disability, gender and geographical reach.

Become more connected to the wider dance, cultural and education sectors

Strategic partnerships are critical to increasing our reach, national presence and impact. We plan to initiate and establish a network of strategic partnerships with dance and cultural organisations, local authorities, community groups, dance schools, universities and professional dance companies.

Raise our profile

NYB's profile and recognition of its work are not as high as they should be for a national organisation established for 30 years, with a successful track record of developing young dancers. We will seek to raise our profile by marketing and communicating more strategically, investing in and increasing our digital infrastructure, presence and activity, and through widening our physical presence across the UK.

Increase our sustainability

To achieve our ambition for NYB's future evolution, we must focus on strengthening our fundraising and developing activity that can generate income.

4.2 Strategic actions

2019

Establish dialogue with national and regional ballet and dance companies, educational and other agencies identified as offering partnership potential and/or the ability to help NYB further its Change Goals.

Establish a team, drawn from NYB's practitioners and alumni, to devise a new 'Engagement' strand within the organisation's activity, principally targeting schools, including SEN schools.

Research good practice in this field and research where need/low engagement exists within the education/youth sector.

Based on this research, work with partners to, in specific regions, identify and approach schools and community groups for which Engagement activity could achieve positive outcomes. (London and Birmingham provisionally identified as initial target regions, reflecting principal locations of NYB's core activity and performances.)

Deliver the Residential Performance Company summer school, Beyond Ballet initiative and public performances at Crescent Theatre, Birmingham and Sadler's Wells Theatre, London (led by interim artistic team).

Introduce a Health & Wellbeing element to the summer school, comprising - for the first time - a resident sports therapist, training and guidance for staff, and support for young dancers.
Implement a fundraising campaign to trusts and foundations, and pilot an annual 'Giving Fund', aimed at alumni, parents and other individuals, to support the development and delivery of the new Engagement and Health & Wellbeing strands.
Develop relationships with Arts Council England and other grant making agencies, with a view to submitting future applications.
Further develop NYB's website and introduce new digital infrastructure (including a Customer Relationship Management system) as central means to increase reach; strengthen engagement with parents, young people and stakeholders; raise profile and achieve administrative efficiencies.
Recruit to the permanent Artistic Director position.
Design an evaluation framework and processes to measure the impact of NYB's work.

2020

Deliver pilot Engagement workshops in identified regions (spring/summer) and roll out to further regions (autumn) subject to securing necessary funding.
Deliver the Residential Performance Company summer school and public performances at Crescent Theatre, Birmingham and Sadler's Wells Theatre, under leadership of new Artistic Director.
Further develop the Beyond Ballet initiative through partnerships established with dance/ballet training institutions and professional companies. Seek to secure financial and in-kind contributions from partners.
Deliver charged-for activities that contribute to organisational overhead, including masterclasses and 'Mini Ballet' workshops.
Continue development of NYB's website, digital infrastructure and use of social media platforms.
Approach potential individual donors with whom NYB has an established relationship and initiate new relationships, including introduction of a refreshed Patrons scheme.
Submit grant funding application to Arts Council England based on strategy to increase reach and inclusion, and develop talent for the future workforce.
Implement evaluation framework to monitor the impact of NYB's work, and use findings to aid advocacy, external communications and fundraising.

2021

Expand Engagement programme through established partnerships and collaborations, to include at least one Residency project in an SEN school, with the objective to feature in some capacity the work produced through the Residency within the Company's public performances.
Deliver the Residential Performance Company summer school, Beyond Ballet initiative and public performances.
Increase delivery of charged-for activities that contribute to organisational overhead, including masterclasses, 'Mini Ballet' and Health & Wellbeing workshops.
Launch an Associate programme to offer more entry points into the NYB Performance Company.
Implement enhancements to NYB website to establish it as a hub for interaction between, and signposting for, emerging dancers, choreographers and artists.
Submit further grant applications to arts funding bodies.