**The Belfast Ensemble
Pay and Conditions for Artists working in Ireland**

**ARTISTS’ PAY POLICY**

The Belfast Ensemble is a highly active non-profit music-theatre company that produces award-winning programming. With an emphasis on ‘new music’ and ensemble practice performance, it produces highly ambitious premieres of contemporary classical music across many fields including theatre, opera, work for young audiences and live digital/multimedia. We place Artists at the heart of what we do and are committed to advancing the living and working conditions for artists by ensuring best practice and fair renumeration for artists and arts workers who contribute to activities across the organisation.

**PRINCIPLES**
Our commitment to Artist’s Pay is directly informed by the value-based principles presented in *Paying the Artist: An Arts Council policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists (2020)* which states:
• [We] value artists: we value the work that artists create, and the way in which they represent and contribute to the cultural life of the nation. This value must be better reflected in how we pay artists.
• We aspire to the position that best practice, not minimum standards, should apply to remuneration and contracting of artists across all artforms and disciplines.
• An artist’s ability to sustain a viable career within their chosen discipline is an essential feature of a healthy arts ecology. Improving standards in what artists are paid and how they are engaged is critical to this and, in particular, to ensuring a diversity of voices is represented within the arts.
• The underpaid or unpaid contributions of artists represent a hidden subsidy to the cultural life of Ireland; we recognise that this is unfair and unsustainable.
• We submit that where public funding is involved, fair and equitable remuneration is a matter of policy and prioritisation and, accordingly, should be factored into the budgeting process rather than being budget-dependent.

**BEST PRACTICE**We strive to deliver best practice as outlined in *Paying the Artist: An Arts Council policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists (2020):*• Ensuring that a policy and approach agreed by board and management dealing with all aspects of engagement with artists are in place and available to artists and published on the organisation’s website.
• Being open, transparent and upfront in communications with artists to ensure clarity from both perspectives on the ask and the offer.
• Complying with rates, terms, practices and standards recommended by representative

and resource organisations, and utilising available toolkits and resources to support the

contracting process.

• Aiming for continued improvement in rates, acknowledging the low base from which

current norms and standards are set and that minimum standards are not an acceptable

ambition.

• Ensuring all engagements are covered by a contract.

• Ensuring that remuneration and contracts reflect the full scope of what an artist is

expected and required to deliver.

• Ensuring that artists and/or their representatives have a voice in negotiating terms and

conditions.

• Being clear about the nature and status of an engagement—i.e. whether the contract is

an employment contract or a contract for services— as well as any associated tax, social-

security benefits/ obligations arising (e.g. holiday pay, PRSI, etc.)

• Ensuring that payments reflect and/or differentiate between fees and expenses, including

per diems or other relevant payments.

• Being clear and upfront about how and when payments will be made; this should be set

out in an organisation’s prompt-payment policy.

• Ensuring that artists’ fees are ring-fenced within project budgets so as to ensure they are

protected against budget overruns in other areas.

• Ensuring that artists copyright is respected, both in terms of moral and economic rights.

• Supporting artists to share in the economic life of what they create by ensuring that any

contractual arrangements for artists to benefit from the future exploitation of their work

are appropriate and proportional and reflect the value of what the artist has created.

**PROMPT PAYMENT POLICY**

All payments are managed internally and we aim to pay artists promptly. Fees are processed on receipt of an invoice and aim to be paid within 14 days.

**This policy has been developed with reference to the Arts Council’s Policy *Paying the Artist: An Arts Council policy on fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists (2020)* and was approved by the Board of Directors in March 2024.**