

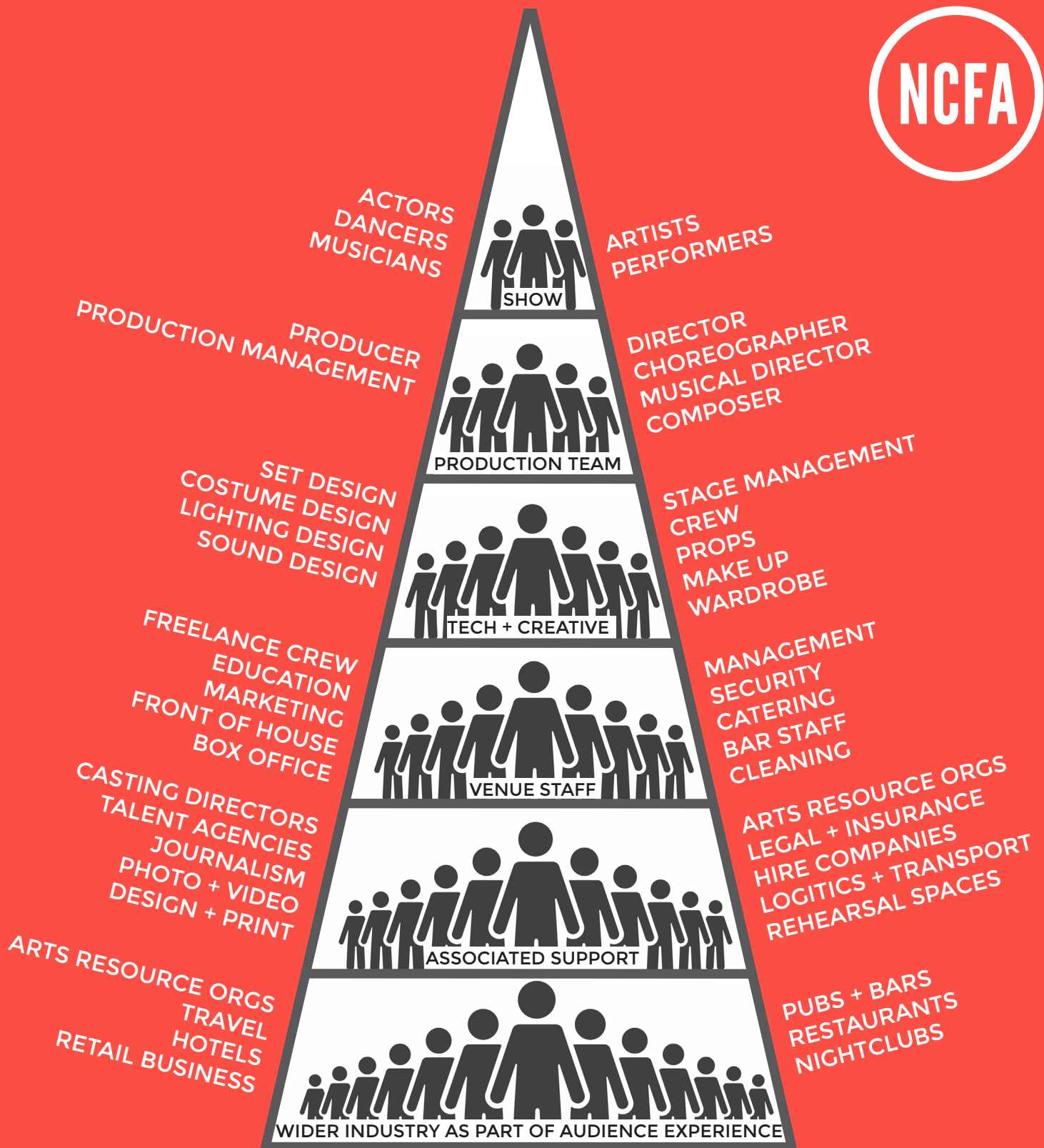


## **OIREACHTAS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON COVID-19: Recovery in the Arts Industry**

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NCFA represents over **54,000 artists, arts workers and arts organisations** who make up Ireland's internationally acclaimed innovative and intelligent arts ecosystem. We represent the makers, the organisations, theatre companies, producers, colleges, venues, arts centres, galleries and publishers. When you see a "Courage" series, there are festivals and showcases that support the musicians to that level, when you watch a "Normal People", there are theatre groups and venues where those actors cut their teeth and where those directors honed their skills. A young, unknown, Sally Rooney can access a grant to write great work. NCFA speak and plan for both the tip of iceberg and the many crucial layers of ice that lift that tip out of the water.

# WHAT YOU SEE ON STAGE IS JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG



To put performers on stage and deliver a single performance requires a vast informal economy made up of **artists, arts workers, arts organisations**, and more. These are full time staff, casual staff, freelancers, sole traders, SME's and larger businesses, as well as the wider hospitality and travel industries. Planning and engagement with various parts of this economy could begin as far as 18 months in advance, with full time rehearsals normally 6-8 weeks before the show.

**The actual performer, and the moment on stage, is just the tip of the iceberg.**

The Covid-19 crisis has created profound challenges for the arts and culture sector which have compounded years of under-investment. Through April and May, NCFA engaged in cross-sectoral consultation with artists and arts workers, and the resource organisations who work with them. On the 27th May, NCFA published a *National Recovery Plan for the Arts* containing 13 actions essential for survival and recovery. The first and most urgent of these goals was achieved on Bloomsday when Government announced emergency funding of €20 million for The Arts Council to enable artists, arts workers and arts organisations to survive the Covid-19 crisis.

This commitment is a positive first step in recognising the value of our arts community. Coupled with the acceleration of the re-opening of theatres, galleries and venues this investment represents new hope for arts workers in Ireland. However, social distancing measures will continue to mean that events and gatherings are simply not viable. **Organisations are losing €2.9m in revenue per month** of shutdown. To address this, NCFA ask that the Pandemic Unemployment Payment for freelance artists and arts workers be extended until arts and cultural events resume to normal levels.

The publication of the report by The Arts Council Covid-19 Expert Advisory Group, of which the NCFA was a member, is very welcome. However, we now need a commitment from Government to **allocate the €30m necessary** to the Arts Council in 2021 to allow this plan to be delivered. Many arts organisations are also charities who have active fundraising programmes to supplement their activities annually. The recent Benefacts study shows that charitable fundraising has been decimated to the tune of €500m. We call on government to reform our tax regime to incentivise and encourage charitable giving to keep arts organisations in business, and to keep Ireland competitive in this area.

Local Authorities play a vital role in the cultural infrastructure. Local festivals and arts centres are sustained through partnership with Local Authority investment. We are now calling on local government to protect those arts budgets to ensure that local activity can resume and begin to rebuild.

Finally, even prior to the Covid-19 crisis, **72% of artists** earned less than the national minimum wage. The new Government has a unique opportunity to introduce a model of Universal Basic Income for all citizens beyond the scope of the pilot scheme set out in the draft Programme for Government. We need urgent, positive action to invest in artists, arts workers and arts organisations as equal members of society who can rebuild a healthy sustainable arts sector for the benefit of all Ireland.

