

cryptic



Impact Report 2023/24

Cryptic: 30 Years of Pioneering Art, Innovation and Global Impact

Cryptic is an international, award-winning, producing arts house based in Glasgow. Our Vision is to give artists and audiences a **unique and memorable Cryptic experience**.

We present today's most imaginative, pioneering artists whilst also nurturing the creative talent of tomorrow. In 2024, we celebrate 30 years of innovation, collaboration and artistic excellence. Founded by **Cathie Boyd** and led by Boyd and **Claire Moran** for 28+ years, they have created a dynamic company that is renowned for music, audiovisual art and experimentation.

Cryptic continually strives to help build **connected, curious communities** through:

- **Cryptic Nights** – Discovering and supporting emerging talent
- **Cryptic Artists** – Developing and promoting artistic excellence
- **Sonica** – A biennial international audiovisual festival
- **Unique Events** – Large scale, site-specific works



Our Mission

To support the development of pioneering artists in creating **high-quality, memorable events for all audiences.**



Values and Principles

Cryptic, a not for profit organisation, is built on collaboration, creativity and care. Working together is at the heart of everything we do, helping us make a real impact. We're committed to supporting and uplifting everyone we work with, championing excellence, sustainability, innovation and inclusivity.

"Ground-breaking production house, Cryptic, has been exploring the outer limits of multi-genre performance uniquely, creatively and successfully, and gathering international renown."

The Scotsman

Board of Directors

Shirani Sabaratnam (Chair); Zarah Butt; Annette Christie; Paul Condrón; Hannah Moore; Susan Robertson; Paul Simmons; Gina Wilson and Cathie Boyd.

2023/2024 at a glance

The core Cryptic team of seven supported **47 artists** and delivered **67 events** to an **audience of 7,493** across **5 countries**. Cryptic continues to have an international profile, presenting work and facilitating **residences in France, Vietnam, Spain, The Netherlands** and **across the UK**.

Cryptic Artists were:



Alex Smoke



Ela Orleans



Heather Lander



Kathy Hinde



Robbie Thomson



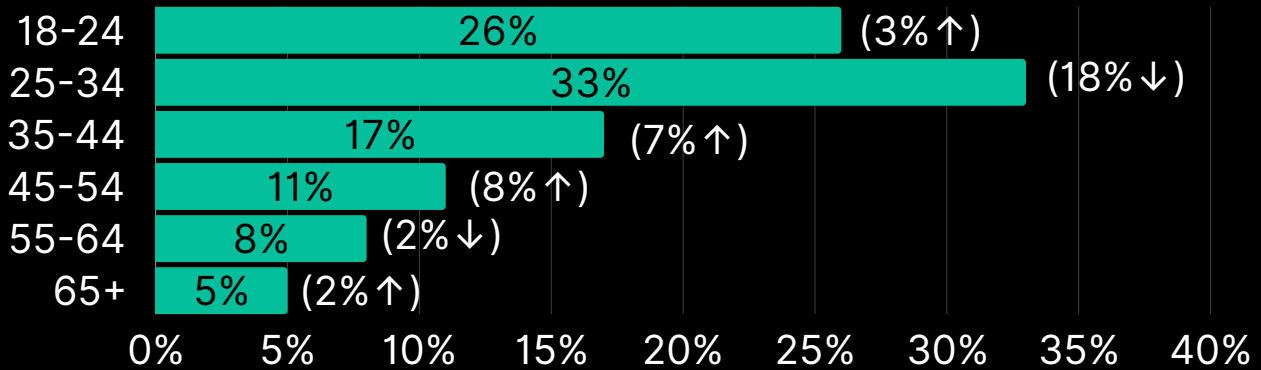
SHHE



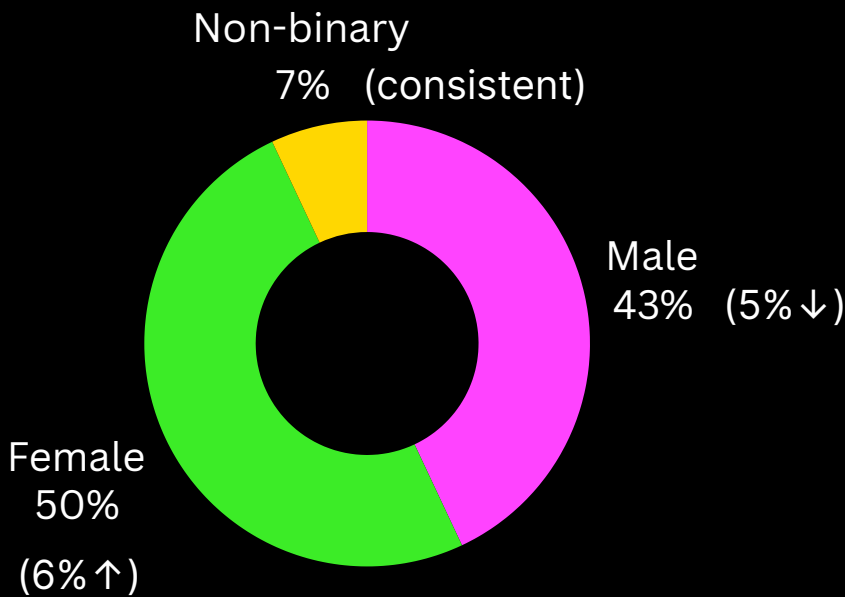
Sonia Killmann

Audience Overview: 2023/24 vs 2022/23

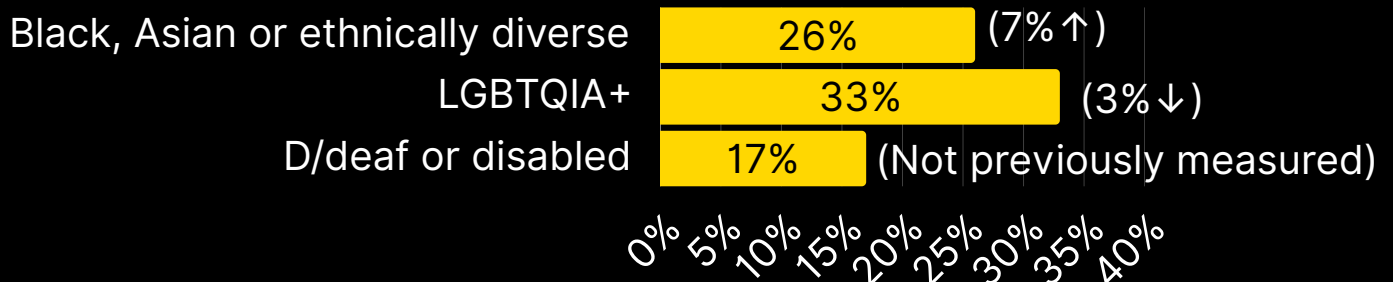
Age Breakdown



Gender



Diversity



18% came from the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland (4% ↑)

A Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

We strive to create and produce work that engages, challenges and reflects the diverse communities we serve. In 2023-24, **21% of our Glasgow audience identified as Black, Asian or ethnically diverse**, surpassing Glasgow's 18% census figure. Our audiences also reflect post-Covid shifts in age demographics, spending habits and cost-of-living challenges (Audience Agency reports and internal analysis).



Continuing to Deliver High Quality Artistic Activities

A key highlight of 2023 was **Sonica Surge**, a weekend-long pop-up edition of our biennial festival Sonica held at Tramway and The Hidden Gardens in Glasgow on 29/30 September.

The programme featured internationally renowned artists **Robert Henke, KMRU, SCHNITT, Tatsuru Arai, Ahmed El Shaer** and **Ujif_notfound**, alongside Scottish artists **EYVE, Veronica Petukhov, Glasgow African Balafon Orchestra, Raydale Dower** and **Dopey Monkey**. Additionally, Cryptic commissioned new works from **Samm Anga, Lucy Duncombe** and **Feronia Wennborg** and Cryptic Artist **Sonia Killmann**, further supporting emerging talent.



In the Press

Press and media coverage for Sonica Surge ranged from community radio shows, **BBC Radio Scotland**, double page spreads in **The List**, a 4-star review in **The Scotsman**, an outstanding review in **Bylines Scotland** and several items in **The Skinny**, **Snack Mag** and **The Herald**.

Combined publication/outlet audience= **79.7 million**

Views= **524,000+**

Engagements= **300+**

Link to press Coverage Book [here](#).

“Cryptic has become an ever-evolving, artistic shapeshifter that has moved from its roots as a leftfield music-theatre company into the delirious melange of sonic art that it is today”

The List



“Boundary pushing Sonica Surge festival...”



“There was a palpable opening night buzz on Friday, in particular for big banner presentation CBM 8032 AV.”



“Being involved with Cryptic has been life changing for me.”



“Both cutting and utterly charming.”

High quality work reaching a global audience

April in Spain

Cryptic Artist **Kathy Hinde** performed *Twittering Machines* at **LEV Festival** in Gijon. This innovative audiovisual work converts **John Keats's Ode to a Nightingale** into Morse code, using multiple outputs to distort the transmission, creating a chattering, artificial dawn chorus.



May in France

Following its successful South American tour throughout 2022, Kathy Hinde's *Earthquake Mass Re-Imagined* continued to captivate audiences in 2023 at **Festival Interstice** in Caen (2–14 May) and **Un Singe en Hiver** in Dijon (26 May–10 June). This ultra-spatialised, sculptural sonic installation brought much-needed attention to the climate crisis and the fragile state of our planet.

Earthquake Mass Re-Imagined is a **Cryptic Commission** in partnership with **Anglo Arts (part of The Anglo Mexican Foundation)** and **Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)**.



May in Glasgow

Ghada Eissa (Egypt) and **Nik Rawlings** (UK) presented *I was in the tide, the tide was in me* at The Pipe Factory in Glasgow. This two-week audiovisual installation which also featured multiple live performances, delved into the fluid and fragmented sense of time experienced with bipolar disorder, memory and neurodiversity, exploring how personal experiences can challenge conventional notions of time.

I was in the tide, the tide was in me was a **Cryptic** and **B'sarya for Arts** (Alexandria, Egypt) **co-production**. Supported by the **British Council's International Collaboration Grants**, designed to encourage UK and overseas organisations to collaborate on international art projects.



October in Vietnam

A **Cryptic Thanh Viet co-production**, *The Field of Heritage* premiered at **Monsoon International Music Festival** in October 2023 and will perform at **Sonica Glasgow 2024**. It explored the rich sonic culture of northern Vietnam, particularly among the Hmong people, through an audiovisual collaboration by composer **Quốc Trung**, musician **Xinh Xo** and visual artists **Heather Lander** and **Veronica Petukhov**. Digital imagery transitioned from vast rice terraces to bustling cityscapes, while the soundscape blended traditional songs, city sounds and local language for an immersive experience.

This project was part of **British Council's UK Viet Nam Season 2023/24** and **Legacy Fund**.



November in Iraq

In 2023, Cryptic Artist **Su Shaw (SHHE)** was the first UK artist to undertake a residency in Erbil, Iraq, supported by the **British Council**.

Shaw brought attention to the climate crisis during her time in Erbil, where she developed her new work *When Water No Longer Flows*, a powerful installation exploring the global water shortage.



On tour

In 2024, **Ela Orleans** began her **PRSF Beyond Borders** tour of *Night Voyager*, with performances at Musical Utopias (The Hague), Perth Concert Hall and Theatre, The Cube (Bristol) and Kings Place (London). The London performance was part of a double bill with **Lucy Duncombe** and **Feronia Wennborg**, presented as part of **Kings Place's Scotland Unwrapped** season.



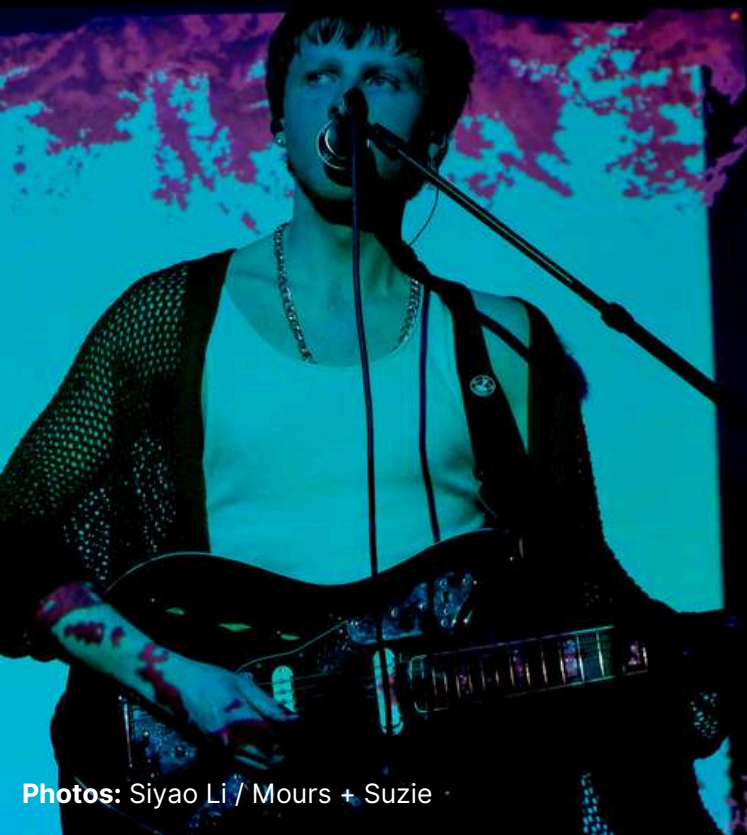
Enabling Creative Development

Supporting artists to **take risks and push their creative boundaries** is at the forefront of what we do.

Cryptic Nights, established in 2009 and delivered in partnership with CCA, is an open call platform aimed at supporting the next generation of artists working across music and visuals. Six events took place between April 2023-March 2024 and supported 14 artists including **Chizu Anucha, Zeo Fawcett, Noon Saleh Eldin, Helen Love, Olesya Ilenok, Benjamin Hall, Grace Fielder, Kirstin Halliday, KINTRA, Veronica Petukhov, Humam Husari, Paria Goodzari, Sean Logan** and **Angus Bradley**. Alongside their performances, each artist received mentoring and dedicated development time.

Deep Dive, our pilot nine-month programme was designed to encourage confidence and experimentation in electronic music making for nine young, Scotland-based musicians (16-25 yrs). We showcased their talent at The Glad Café in April, accompanied by visuals from **Georgina Penstkart**.

The programme was made possible with support from **Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative** and **Glasgow Connected Arts Network**.



Residencies Near and Far: Empowering Artists

In June, we launched a new partnership with ArtHouse Jersey with **Samm Anga** and **Sonia Killmann** undertaking a two-week residency as part of their Cryptic Commissions. Their commissions premiered at **Sonica Surge**.



“Being involved with Cryptic has been life changing for me...I would never have been able to travel, developing my work at residencies. They push me constantly and give feedback when I am working on a project. They allow me the freedom to decide whether to take on a project or not, and give me guidance that has been invaluable, especially at the start of my career”

Sonia Killmann, The Skinny

A new collaborative project, *ELEPHANT! you shake your sheep*, by musicians **Harry Gorski-Brown** (UK) and **Annabelle Playe** (France), evolved through residencies at CCA Glasgow and Un Singe en Hiver in Dijon. The piece will premiere at **Sonica Glasgow 2024**, co-produced by **Cryptic, AnA Company** and **Full Rhizome**, with support from **Diaphonique** and partners **GMEM, Theatre Hexagone, Stereolux** and **Cove Park**.



Our April Cove Park artist residency programme (Est. 2012), welcomed 12 artists from the UK, Luxembourg, Myanmar, The Netherlands, Spain and Ukraine, including **Alba G. Corral, Alex Smoke, Andrey Chugunov, Georgina Penstkart, Harry Gorski-Brown, Kseniia Shcherbakova, Laura Mannelli, No Plexus, SHHE, Sonia Killmann** and **Zwel Mun Wint (Heft)**. All developed new works for Sonica Glasgow 2024.



Inclusion, Diversity, Equalities and Access (IDEA)

Cryptic is an equal opportunities and inclusive organisation. We celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and challenge all forms of prejudice and wish to create a caring, accountable community. We are committed to creating safer spaces for staff, artists and audiences, especially those at risk of discrimination to make the sector safer, more inclusive and diverse.

In adopting the **Social Model of Disability**, we recognise that it is physical or attitudinal barriers that disable people. We are signatories of the **Scottish Business and Equality Action Pledges, Family Arts Campaign** and encourage everyone to participate and engage in the cultural life of the cities and communities. We are also committed to **Fair Work**, having been a **Living Wage Employer** since 2015 and have partnered with the **Robertson Trust Scholars** since 2018. Cryptic is also members of **Keychange** (2018), **Sound and Music's Fair Access Principles** (2021), **Menopause Workplace Pledge** (2022) and a **Disability Confident Employer** (2023).



We have increased the diversity of our open call selection panels, simplified the application process, offered different formats for applications (audio, video and written) and drop-in sessions in advance of the closing date and given feedback for unsuccessful shortlisted applicants. We have also reviewed our education and qualification requirements for roles/opportunities and offered interview questions in advance for job applicants. Applicants for both open calls and recruitment were invited to share their access needs as part of the application process and we made a financial commitment to support access requirements.

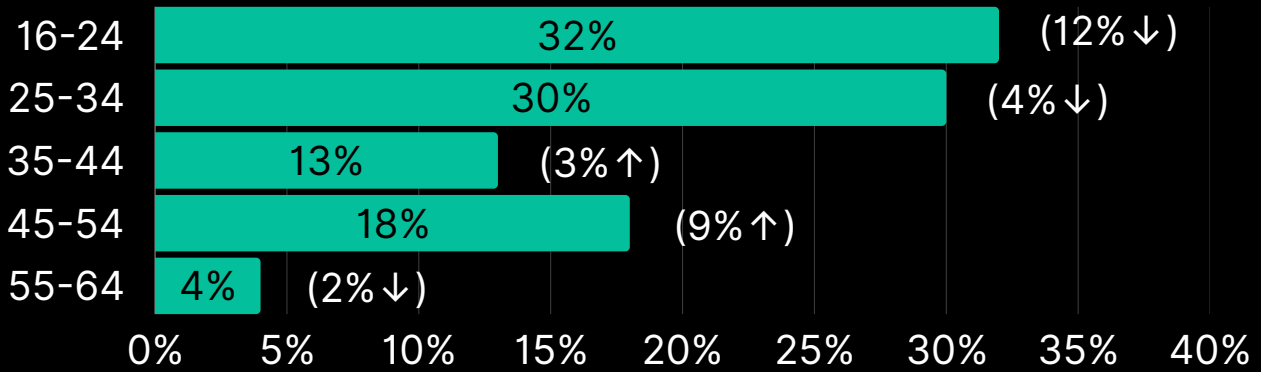
You can read our **IDEA Policy** [here](#).

We are committed to support individual access requirements where possible and review both our Environmental and IDEA Policies to increase equity, inclusion and accessibility.

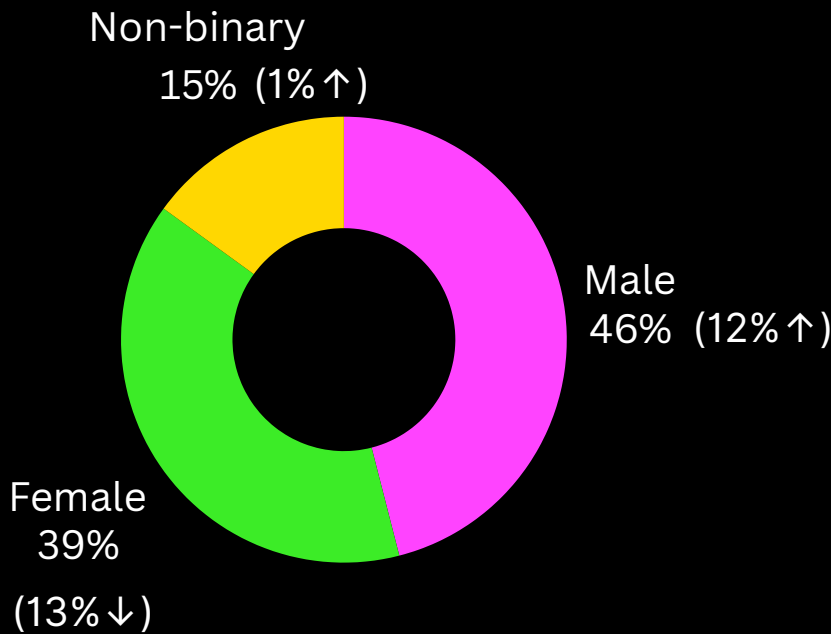


Artists 2023/24 (compared to 2022/23):

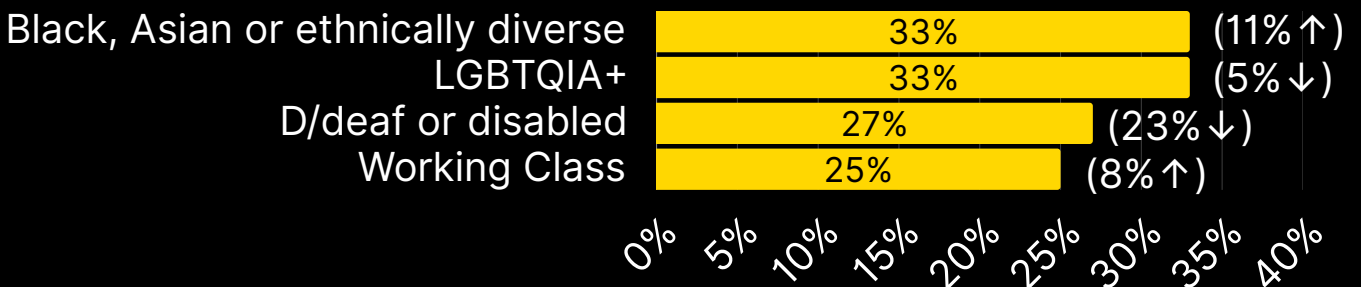
Age Breakdown



Gender



Diversity



Sustainable Cities and Net Zero

Cryptic was shortlisted for the Net Zero Achievement Award at the Glasgow Business Awards in 2023.

For ten years Cryptic has been a member of **The Green Arts Initiative** (GAI) and in 2024 we became signatories of GAI's **Green Arts Charter**. We are dedicated to embedding environmental sustainability into all our work, integrating it into our culture of partnership building and positive social impact, using our platform to inspire and inform. By taking a low carbon approach to project planning, delivery and artistic programming, in addition to measuring and analysing our carbon emissions, we hope to achieve our ambition to reduce our carbon footprint.



Cryptic are members of the CCA's **Cultural Tenant's Green Team** and **IETM's Green School**. We are committed to remaining up to date with current ambitions, plans and knowledge with staff regularly attending talks, conferences and training. We recognise climate change as a social, political and cultural issue as well as a scientific and environmental one and are committed to creating an increased awareness of the climate crisis. As Scotland strides towards its 2045 net zero target, Cryptic is actively adopting carbon reduction strategies to address the climate change emergency, as well as introducing adaptation plans to ensure our work is sustainable.

We recognise that achieving net zero is an ongoing process. Working with Creative Carbon Scotland, our commitment is backed up through our overarching **Environmental Policy**, comprising our **Staff Policy, Travel Policy, Touring Policy, Net Zero Action Plan** and our **Social and Environmental Sustainability Strategy**.

For Sonica Surge, we focused on resource efficiency and minimal environmental impact, using circular economy principles, digital communications and waste reduction. In collaboration with Tramway, we introduced reusable cups, recycling bins and sustainable food vendors, led by our Green Coordinator through the **Step up to Net Zero Programme**.



Fair Work

Cryptic is committed to the **Scottish Government's Fair Work First policy**, enabling and facilitating professional, ethical and productive working environments that stimulate creative freedom and risk taking whilst ensuring that our employees, freelancers and artists participate and engage in all we do. We achieve this by supporting and promoting the principles of **Security, Effective Voices and Opportunities** within the company.

More information on our commitments can be read [here](#).



Cryptic Angels

Thank you to our wonderfully, **Immersed**, **Inspired** and **Intrigued** Cryptic Angels for their continued support.

Immersed:

Martin and Jan
Butterfield April
Chamberlain
MC
Christopher Glasgow
Dame Seona Reid
Gina Wilson

Inspired:

Cathie Boyd
Eunice Crook
Colin Hicks
Alan Orr
Douglas Scott
Steven Spier

Intrigued:

Karen Anderson
Paul Climie
Bjorn Heile
Mary Macleod

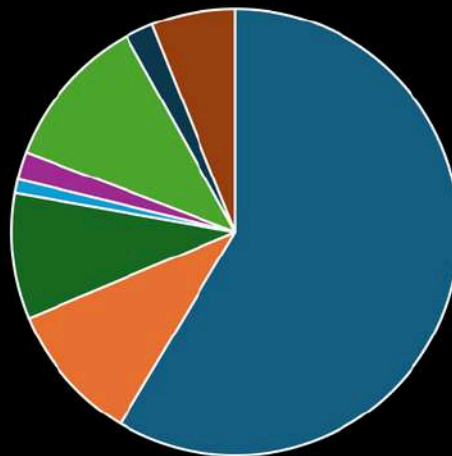
Join the Cryptic journey and help us support artists to create, innovate and inspire [here](#).



Finance

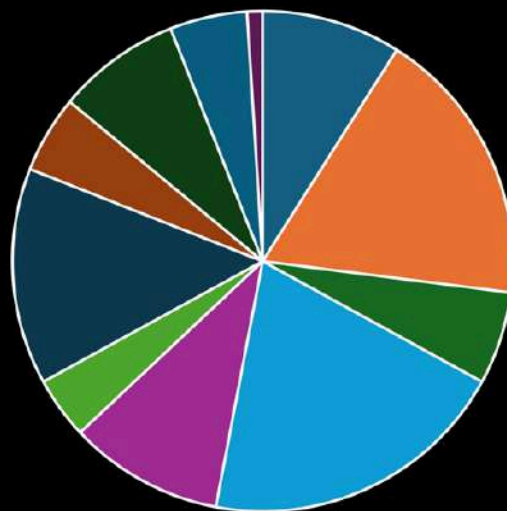
Demand for Cryptic continues to increase from audiences, artists and promoters. Diversifying income streams and maximising Box Office returns from Sonica are essential for our success and we continue to expand global partnerships to increase our income. Existing partners include **Creative Scotland, PRS Foundation, Glasgow Life, British Council** and **Embassies** with investment focusing on projects with long-term potential to enhance creative and financial returns. Legacy plays an important role within our work.

Income



- Creative Scotland RFO (58%)
- EXPO (10%)
- Trust and Foundation (9%)
- Donations (1%)
- In-kind support (2%)
- International Fundraising (11%)
- Government Schemes (2%)
- Earned Income (6%)

Expenditure



- Planning and International Development (9%)
- Sonica (18%)
- Cryptic Nights (6%)
- Cryptic Artists (20%)
- Special Projects (10%)
- Touring (4%)
- Marketing (14%)
- IDEA (5%)
- HR (8%)
- Overheads (5%)
- Governance and Audit (1%)

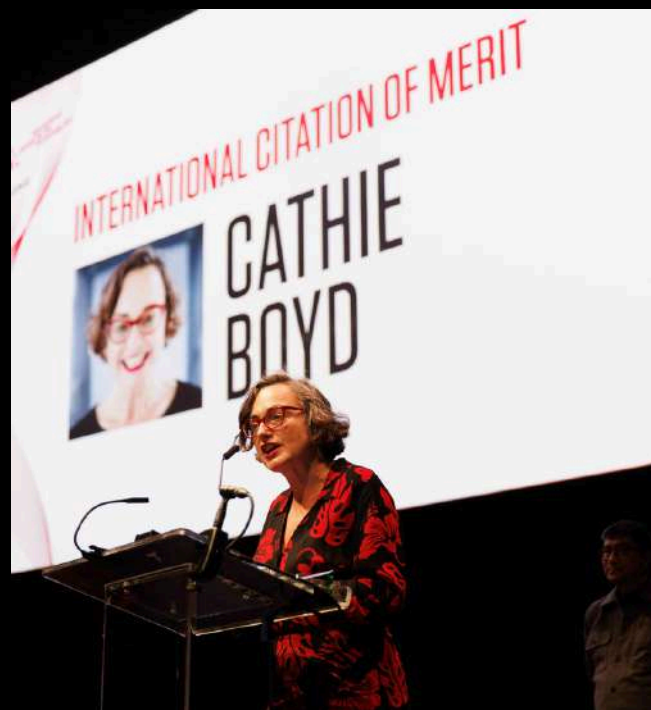
Awards and Firsts

Cathie Boyd was presented with the **International Citation of Merit Award** in January 2024 in New York, by the **International Society of Performance Arts (ISPA)**. Previous recipients have included **Claudia Toni, Alistair Spalding CBE, David Staples, Graham Sheffield CBE** and **Joseph Melillo**.

In 2024 Cryptic celebrates its 30th anniversary.

We can only create memorable events, giving artists and audiences a unique and memorable Cryptic experience with the support of artists, staff, Board of Directors, funders, donors and supporters, for which we are extremely grateful.

Thank you.



cryptic



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Photos: Neil Jarvie / KMRU + Robin Fox; Mirrin Hegharty / Benjamin Hall