

Ian

**From:** Tony [Tony@imagine.org.uk]  
**Sent:** 01 September 2004 10:52  
**To:** info  
**Subject:** I do hope this is not too long![Scanned]

Dear Cultural Commission

Good luck to you all and I hope this is not too long!

In the area of Performing Arts for children and young people so much has already been achieved and so much is in place, ready to to give school children in areas throughout Scotland the opportunity to develop their potential, their ambition, their creativity and imagination through excellent events, performances and sustainable partnerships with creative, cultural organisations and individuals. Scottish Children's Theatre is, arguably, the success story of the last decade in Scottish Theatre; from a wasteland of poorly resourced, underrehearsed productions to the award winning global touring scene of today. We are on the threshold of giving Scottish children a variety of high quality work for many years to come, perhaps equalling the success of countries like Denmark, Holland and Belgium. The quality is there, the infrastructure is, mostly, there too. What we require is a real investment in performing arts for children in Scotland that will:

- \* allow for creative development of artists and ideas to ensure that the highest quality work ends up being produced

- \* challenge the accepted idea of the working method - short rehearsal, under produced, under developed and sometimes unfinished work with little shelf life - to a creation methodology that is not one size fits all but meets the demands of the creator, with the goal of developing complete works that, like many throughout the world, can be enjoyed and presented over many years, thus also providing huge value for money.

- \* allow organisations like Imagine to continue its development role, pushing forward the drive for Family Friendly venues, for greater dynamic understanding between artist and teacher, artist and child, artist and artist

- \* support the developing links between arts organisations and higher education to ensure that Scottish children have access to the best and brightest talent we produce

- \* The SAC have decided on a pot of £600,000 core funding for work for children and young people. Wales spends around £2million. Denmark over £10million. We know there is the will to spend more. The reality is that any new money has to come from the existing pot. If the Commission, the SAC and the Executive is serious about creativity and the importance of creativity for young people then real investment has to be made. If not, we face a position fairly soon where there will be a good solid infrastructure that has no artists left and none coming through. Our top companies have been producing the goods for almost a decade now. Investment, of a kind, has been made with them. It's a narrow and shallow pot and too precarious to allow the artform to continue to flourish and develop.

- \* I apologise for this. I really really don't want to talk about funding. But everything else is in place now and it would be such a waste, and an ultimate dereliction of duty to our children, if we don't grasp this opportunity now.

- \* My only other point at this stage is for the retention of a national, arms length body that is not connected to the Executive. Regionalisation would be a disaster if it is not balanced by a strong national arts policy that can be proactive to the needs of our culture in its entirety and can make and take the difficult choices that always have to be made. Lets push for the regions to embrace creativity and culture at the heart of all they do and lets work in tandem with them to move our culture and society forward.

- \* And finally, the commission must engage with the changes in the curriculum that are taking place. In fact, it could be argued that if creativity is not placed at the heart of the curriculum, rather than being increasingly marginalised, then all the other measures the commission puts in place will be absolutely meaningless because we will continue to educate a population who can pass exams but have no interest in the arts, no sense of their own creativity, and little imagination.

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\* And on that cheery note, good luck with your work, and if there is anything I can do to assist in the process you are going through then please do not hesitate to call me.

With best wishes.

Tony Reekie

Director

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