

102.

Ian

1 misc

From: Dorabeet@aol.com
Sent: 27 September 2004 15:50
To: info
Subject: Cultural commission Phase 1 of the consultation process.RESPONSE[Scanned]

Dear Mr Boyle,
Attached is my individual response to the Consultation Process of the Cultural Commission Phase 1.
I hope you find useful if a little startling.
Best wishes with your work and that of the Commission.
yours sincerely,
Dora Beeteson.

27/09/2004

Living on the border of North Ayrshire and Inverclyde my observations are a snapshot of 'cultural deprivation'. Inverclyde I believe has an 'Arts Strategy' but am not aware of one in North Ayrshire. Nearly everything in the field of culture we experience locally is amateur. Hence there are no benchmarks, no standards to aspire to except for the best of the amateur field. There the cultural spectrum begins and ends. The nearest accessible place for professional theatre and music is Glasgow. It is not unusual to come across both young people and adults who have never seen a professional performance of any kind.

The two outstanding reasons for this seem to be cost and transport. Much is done for concessions for the elderly, students and the unemployed but it is up to each individual to take up that initiative. What is needed is a chance for school-age young people to go to opera and concerts at a considerably reduced cost or no cost at all. In my experience in education in England, reduced cost concert tickets were made available to schools through the schools. Opera tickets for the English National Opera were free and again distributed through the school or college. These were for ordinary evening performances not school matinees which in some ways defeat the object of the exercise. The operas were well chosen usually focusing on a good story for example : Britten's 'Rape of Lucretia' and ' Boris Godunov' I am unclear who picked up the tab for the tickets. It could have been the school or college or the local education authority. Transport was never a problem.

However when the train to your home station is only once an hour it is a different matter and leaves you solely dependent on the car. Take for example the Edinburgh International Festival. This should be accessible to everybody in Scotland. Yet with late starting times and late finishing times for the most prestigious concerts it can often mean leaving before the concert is finished and galloping to Haymarket Station to catch the last train back to Glasgow and then picking up the car in Glasgow. Over a 3 week period this is not an attractive proposition. My suggestion which may verge on the heretical rather than the just plain radical is that the Edinburgh Festival a bit like the Olympic games should be split between Glasgow and Edinburgh and instead of being 3 concentrated weeks should be staggered over 3 months. This would give a much better cultural spread and give everybody a chance to hear the eminent orchestras and soloists, the theatre groups etc who perform there and increase cultural awareness. Some years ago at a concert given by the Vienna Philharmonic at the Royal Concert Hall as soon as the first instrumentalist walked on to the platform the audience applauded loudly. They had yet to play a note.

There are of course other barriers. The arts are not considered part of the 'culture'. Here I use the term in the post-modern sense. Which Celtic or Rangers footballer goes to the theatre or the opera? How would he be perceived by the fans if he admitted to doing so? Come to think of it, that goes for our leaders and politicians too. When Scottish Opera's activities are curtailed isn't that also perceived as a thumbs down not being worthy of a second thought? Such actions do not go unnoticed by the uninitiated and once having confirmed the uninitiated in their prejudices and we are talking about all age groups from schoolchildren to pensioners how can the population then be persuaded to embrace what you are trying to do?