

Ian

From: graeme.bowman [graeme.bowman@ntlworld.com]
Sent: 28 September 2004 01:37
To: info
Subject: Scotland's cultural future[Scanned]

Dear Cultural Commission...

Apologies for the delay in responding to you, but if you want to enhance Scotland's cultural future, you might wish to consider the following points:

EDUCATION: Definitely needs a radical shake-up, not just in terms of the classes and subjects taught-also in terms of the structure of the school day and the amount of choice which young people are allowed to exercise over their daily lives. At present they are forced to go to school, forced to study subjects they often have no interest in, compelled to obey rules they've had no hand in shaping, compelled to obey authority figures they didn't elect and conditioned for the mind-numbing grind of a Monday- Friday routine. If we want to increase the number of young people who leave school and have interesting opinions about the world, a degree of self-belief and a desire to express themselves (i.e. artists) the least we can do is give them a lot more choice about the subjects they study. If a kid is great at French and Art and cannot stand Science and Maths (or vice versa), why do we force them to study subjects they have no interest in? This just prepares them for a life doing jobs they have no real interest in and never following their heart's desire. From my own recollection, it is also extremely tedious for teachers who have to teach large numbers of kids who have no interest in the subjects they are studying-- its just a recipe for antagonism, tension, self-loathing, frustration and the stifling of independent thought. If we want to encourage and develop young people who can express themselves, surely the least we can do is give them some experience in making choices at an early age, trusting their own judgement, giving them the freedom to make some mistakes (and learn from them) and letting them choose to study the subjects they really enjoy and dropping the subjects that don't stimulate them? So, if someone is good at Science subjects but cannot stand languages, they should be allowed to drop the languages and do twice as much science. Think how much they'll learn, think how much more teachers will enjoy their careers... teachers and pupils might actually look forward to going to school every day... and there might be a lot less bullying, disruption and violence.

INDEPENDENT TV PRODUCTION-- The broadcasters are far too cosy with a small number of very large indies and give them too many commissions. This stifles opportunities for small young companies who wish to enter the sector. Regardless of how good their ideas might be, they never get a fair crack of the whip because certain Comm Eds have developed 'relations' with a few key suppliers. Relations are important but so are ideas... there is too much favouritism displayed by broadcasters towards large indies

SCOTTISH THEATRE (AND THE ARTS WORLD IN GENERAL)-- In general, it is too heavily dominated by 'play it safe' middle class people who are (by and large) beneficiaries of capitalism and do not wish to see it challenged in any substantive way. They tend to censor things and screen out plays which challenge the safe and cosy little world that produced them. I speak from personal experience-- my play has received very positive responses from theatre companies in Chicago, London and Birmingham... but very little encouragement or feedback in Scotland. The people who end up running theatre companies and arts organisations in general tend to come from the posh parts of town, they live in the posh parts of town and are generally hostile and unsupportive to anything which comes from a perspective they are unfamiliar with... don't know how to change this... perhaps by encouraging a wider range of people from more diverse backgrounds to enter the arts... perhaps by introducing some changes to the education system as outlined above...?

Sorry if I'm being a wee bit rambly and incoherent in some of the above.. it's a bit late and I want to get this to you by 27th Sept as you requested. Hope you find it interesting

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