

29 SEP 2004

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Dear Mr. Boyle,

I read your letter from the Cultural Commission in the Ayrshire Post.

Our cities need to be able to offer performances of outstanding quality both for their citizens and for visitors. Scottish Opera has aimed for excellence and produced many fine productions. Most performances at the Theatre Royal in Glasgow are very well attended. It is chronically under funded; it receives less public support than any other opera company in Britain. Scottish Opera deserves much greater financial support. Its educational and outreach programmes help to develop future audiences.

The audience for plays is diminishing all over Britain. Children's theatre and community drama may represent ways of reviving interest in live theatre. I would like to see encouragement given to: companies producing plays (and puppet plays) for children,  
drama groups and clubs for children and young people,  
community drama groups.

Some measure of funding may be necessary.

Festivals bring communities together and encourage visitors. Most of them need sponsorship and advice. Venues for events can be a problem and local authorities should be discouraged from closing venues suitable for small scale performances. (South Ayrshire Council have neglected and now closed the Civic Theatre).

The current television series on Scottish writing seems to be very good. Perhaps further series on aspects of Scottish culture could be encouraged.

Ayr, in common with other Scottish towns, has a Carnegie Library. The number of books being borrowed is decreasing. New ideas on the development of libraries as community cultural centres might regenerate them. I believe that some London boroughs have successfully modernised their libraries.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah O'Donoghue

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