

Live Music Now! Scotland

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Cultural Commission Review

Response from Live Music Now! Scotland

27 September 2004

29 SEP 2004

‘The review will take as its starting-point the premise that each person in Scotland has cultural rights; that each person has rights of access to cultural activity.’ *Jack McConnell, First Minister, Scottish Parliament, 30 November 2003*

‘It has been my dream to bring live music back into the everyday lives of people of all ages... Not only in the home, but also in those places where most of us spend our time, where we work, study, suffer or celebrate, be it in office or factory, school or prison, parish hall or church.’ *Yehudi Menuhin, Founder, Live Music Now, April 1977*

Although over 26 years separate the above statements of Jack McConnell and the late Yehudi Menuhin, the vision of each has been fired by imaginations which are in complete accord.

What we do

Live Music Now!, which is the largest educational and outreach programme in the UK, fulfils Menuhin’s dream by involving hundreds of thousands of people in the pleasure and inspiration of high quality live music at the same time as providing vital encouragement, support and experience of talented young musicians at the start of their professional careers.

Live Music Now! extended to Scotland in 1984 and now gives in the region of 300 participatory performances and workshops a year throughout the country.

Audiences include -

- Children with special needs
- Adults with learning difficulties
- Older people in day clubs and nursing/residential care
- Young offenders
- People in remote, rural and island areas

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Musicians are drawn from the country's most talented young players. Performing as soloists or in small groups, they come from a range of musical traditions, including western classical, Gaelic, Scottish/Irish traditional.

Musicians are selected through a rigorous audition process and must combine exceptional musical talent with an ability to communicate and establish a rapport with their audiences.

Live Music Now! musicians visit audiences in their own environment, allowing them the freedom and comfort of familiar surroundings. Venues include schools, pupil referral units, day centres, prisons, hospices, residential and nursing homes, village halls and community centres.

Live Music Now!, therefore, is already playing its part as a vitally important strand of fulfilling Jack McConnell's vision of everyone in the country, regardless of age, ability or where they happen to live, having access to arts of high quality.

The consistently high quality of our musicians is evident from those who have gone on to become eminent in the profession - e.g soprano Lisa Milne, Malcolm Martineau and Scott Mitchell, pianists, James Crabb, classical accordionist; Jamie McDougall, singer and radio presenter, Mary Ann Kennedy, singer, harpist and Gaelic TV broadcaster.

What we need

In order for Live Music Now! to carry out the shared vision of Jack McConnell and Yehudi Menuhin throughout Scotland, our future will need –

1. an ongoing pool of exceptionally talented young musicians who can build their own lives and successful careers in Scotland
2. appropriate funding to allow the scheme to reach every corner of the country
3. a healthy musical infrastructure of which Live Music Now! is an interdependent part
4. a society which values the arts, including music, as an integral part of life, regardless of circumstance

As explanation –

1. opportunities for musical education must be available to all, regardless of background and circumstances. We are extremely pleased to see the Youth Music Initiative bearing fruit and, indeed, to be part of it with a new project to work with children with special needs and young offenders.

The RSAMD and Scottish universities must be in a position to attract and retain high quality teaching and academic staff across a wide range of musical genres.

As an organisation, Live Music Now! must be able to continue to offer specialist training to the musicians who are accepted onto the scheme.

Professional opportunities of the highest international standing must be available to attract musicians who wish to live and work in Scotland.

2. Live Music Now! is not currently fulfilling the potential it has to realise the visions of Jack McConnell and Yehudi Menuhin. There are countless people within our target groups that we cannot reach because of lack of funds. As it is, we may reach some audiences just once or twice a year, and others on an even more ad hoc basis. For instance, a recent request from North Uist to work in primary schools, secondary school, care homes and day care centres may have to be turned down. Distance equals hugely increased costs when we take Live Music Now to island areas.
3. Live Music Now! is only one part of our musicians' working lives. We need to collaborate and connect with the other stars in Scotland's musical constellation – e.g. an internationally regarded company like Scottish Opera with orchestral, chorus and soloist employment opportunities is essential for our musicians to be inspired by and to aspire to. In turn, the opportunities offered by Live Music Now! are of vital importance in giving young musicians the professional and musical development they so desperately need to be able to cross the bridge to a fully professional career in companies such as Scottish Opera, the RSNO, SCO, as well as further afield.
4. The responses – see enclosed - from audiences, teachers and care staff to Live Music Now! are indicative of a society that already values high quality music provision. Our desire is to sustain and nurture this positive spirit for the benefit of people throughout every community in the country.

Carol Main
Director
Live Music Now! Scotland
27 September 2004

LIVE MUSIC NOW! SCOTLAND

Some feedback – 2003/04

The opportunity to hear and see, at very close range, the musicians and their instruments was a great new experience. The children (and staff!) really enjoyed the concert and it was talked about lots afterwards (Special needs teacher, Speyside High School)

Greatly received and beneficial to all. It brought back lovely memories to our clients and is a very valuable musical experience. (Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice, Glasgow)

The chance for children to play the instruments was excellent. They enjoyed it immensely. Thank you! (Aboyne Primary School, Aberdeenshire)

The audience of older people thought the whole programme was wonderful and the personality of the musicians was a great plus (Eric Liddell Centre, Edinburgh)

The concert highlighted how music can relax and soothe the residents and it really helped them engage with their carers (Eadar Glinn Home, Oban)

Listened and met the two lassies at our wrinkly club. They were brilliant and gave us oldies a great time for which we were so grateful. Don't be too long before you are back! (Craignure Lunch Club, Isle of Mull)

It was a privilege to meet and hear Eleni play (St Michael's Friendship Club, Edinburgh)

We wouldn't be able to hear such a talented musician unless we went south (Primary School, Wick)

It is lovely to have the live interaction between the members and musicians. Usually they listen to tapes/cds. (St Bernard's Dementia Centre, Edinburgh)

The concert went very well and we were impressed at the extent to which Eilidh and Andy involved everyone having a go at different instruments. (Forest View Centre for adults with learning disabilities, Stonehaven)

The children were enthralled by the whole experience. We were privileged to have Live Music Now visit the school (Viewlands Primary School, Perth)

Valuable as a whole school event. Several normally unresponsive pupils really enjoyed the music. Excellent – couldn't be better. (Middlefield Special School, Glasgow)

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon – a very valuable exercise to see the enjoyment of our elderly islanders (Community Hall, Gigha)

Very enthusiastic applause which was well deserved for an excellent programme very well performed. This was a high quality professional performance (Strathearn Music Society)

I had been slightly concerned about possible disruptions, but there was absolutely no need. The programme, the performance and the presence and interaction of the musicians was absolutely first class. It had such a positive impact. (Harlaw Centre, Inverurie)

We're over the moon! The engaging and charming personalities of the musicians and the sheer quality of the performance were wonderful. We want them back! (Lochranza Village Hall, Isle of Arran)

It was uplifting, an unforgettable experience, we were all quite transported and inspired, especially on such a cold evening with snow warnings (older people's group, Edinburgh)

Fantastic! It let the children hear different instruments and sounds as well as voices (Carrongrange Special School, Stenhousemuir)

Superb musicians who had a really nice style with our pupils and held their attention for the whole duration (Cherrybank Special School, Perth)

This was so very valuable. It is vitally important to keep traditional music alive (Walston Primary School, Lanarkshire)

All seemed to enjoy the experience, particularly our pupils with severe and complex needs. They rarely get the chance to hear live music and this was right at their level (Glebe School, Perth)

It was totally different from other concerts we have had. The residents' opinion was that they were very talented (Newlands Residential Home, Dunfermline)

An audience with a wide range of learning disabilities listened appreciatively and responded to humorous elements. It provided an opportunity for people to experience music they may not have heard so often and to hear it 'live' with all the value that that brings. (Dumfries Activity and Resource Centre)

From the word go at both venues everyone was smiling and very attentive. They really enjoyed the concerts. The musicians obviously love what they do and it's incredibly infectious. Now we have had a taste of Live Music Now, we would love to hear more. The concerts were made very special by some of the music being from the Isle of Mull and our older audiences were very touched by the beautiful rendition. Thank you very much, a great success. (Craignure Village Hall/Salen Resource Centre, Isle of Mull)

A little bit of culture now and again is no bad thing (Whitefoord House for disabled ex-servicemen, Edinburgh)