

## **Lochgoilhead Fiddle Workshop: Phase 1 Consultation Response**

### **Education**

#### **A :Children**

- The Youth Music Initiative needs to be extended to provide development funds over a ten year period. We have had an enthusiastic reponse, indeed rapturous, to our new classes in local schools, which we are offering in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council. The benefits of the scheme need to be extended to older children. Where instrumental tuition is concerned, it is important that children should be able to continue in secondary schools what they have learned as juniors. In Argyll and Bute, for instance, there is currently no violin tuition at secondary level, so we are creating a demand both in the children and their parents for something which is not currently on offer.
- It is important that school experience is complemented by out of school activity, ideally provided by organizations such as ourselves, the Feisean etc

#### **B: Adult education**

This is currently highly problematic, in that the voluntary sector has nobody to turn to for funding, apart from the SAC's existing fund which is limited to £3000.00 per annum.

Our experience is that any voluntary musical education organization must focus strongly on the teaching of adults who have hitherto had no access to music for these reasons:

- The demand for adult instrumental tuition is incredibly high: after two years we are teaching 10 per cent of the adults in our local rural community, an amazing statistic.
- These adults are developing fast, learning not just how to play, but how to compose and arrange music. Their effect on the cultural life of our area is already profound and is incalculable for the future
- These adults drive forward our whole cultural programme with their voluntary activity. Without adult support and enthusiastic commitment no organization can hope to achieve its long term aims with the children. THE BEST WAY TO GET THE ADULTS INVOLVED IS TO TEACH THEM AS WELL.

#### **C: The teachers**

Where musical education is concerned, we can trust the musicians to deliver, but there is an issue of disgracefully low rates of pay for freelance musicians. We see no point in developing musicians for the future if they are then asked to work for starvation rates. However voluntary organizations are themselves desperately underfunded, particularly if most of their students are adults (see above!), and this keeps tutor rates far too low. We would like to see an open consensus on freelance rates, reflected in funding granted to voluntary organizations. At the moment it is a discreditable free for all where the musicians are the losers.

## Institutional infrastructure

### A Funding, funding, funding...

- A national overhaul of voluntary sector funding is desperately needed. The current funding trail is a nightmare for small organizations, requiring them to devote their scanty administrative resources simply to getting money from many different organisations year after year. Unlike businesses, most voluntary organizations cannot or should not charge market rates to those they serve, *so they are by nature loss-making activities*. Of course voluntary organizations should and must follow good financial management practices, but to pretend that they can ever stand alone without public funding input does nobody any good. Current funding applications usually challenge the unhappy applicants to prove sustainability, but without core funding, or the ability to charge commercial rates, no organization can ever plan for the future with any certainty. No business would want to survive like this, and it makes for lack of long term planning and therefore inefficiency, in addition to the corrosive effect on morale.
- Everyone usually focuses on the inadequacy of the total funding pot, *but in fact the mechanics of public funding are themselves fifty percent of the problem*, causing diversion of voluntary sector resources from where they should be concentrated-point of delivery-to the endlessly repetitive business of securing public money. Every hour of the many spent on doing one funding application after another is an hour less spent on developing the organisation's ability to deliver the cultural experience which we want to achieve. Also application writing is a demanding and specialist task; few small teaching organizations have the time or skills to do it, so it is basically a counterproductive and ineffective way of disseminating money to good causes.
- A clear funding trail under the aegis of one organization would be welcome, encompassing organizations from start-up through to maturity.
- The current emphasis on new projects is counterproductive to long-term planning. There will always be a need for earmarked funds for new organizations and projects, but once an organization gets off the ground it requires continuing financial support, whether we call this core funding or something else. Acting on the perception that voluntary organizations are *designed* to provide services at less than market costs, "sustainability" should mean a public funding support path for ongoing activities over a three to five year span, which is designed to close the gap between the costs of provision of services and what is charged to the public.
- This core funding needs to be ring-fenced and should be protected from political interference, whether at national or regional level.
- The funding of large national cultural organizations, eg Scottish Opera (!) should be kept quite separate. It makes no sense that an important national institution such as this should be in direct competition with the burgeoning traditional music sector for funds.

## **Delivery of services etc**

Because of Scotland's geography, centralization of services should be avoided like the plague. It is tempting to found big, prestigious institutions in large urban centres, but we feel the money is better spent on taking the services to the people, if a choice has to be made. The following remarks are based on rural needs.

- If services are costed on a per capita basis, then rural areas will never get a look-in, whether we are talking about education or eg concerts. We welcomed the recent touring grants to traditional bands, but feel that the emphasis should be on subsidizing tours for bands which do not expect to draw over a thousand in the audience. Most rural areas have a maximum audience of 100- 200 in the largest village halls, and ticket prices have to be kept well under the urban norm. Subsidising three to five-man bands to tour village halls would be very effective in widening cultural access.
- We need to set up and therefore finance a network of rural promotional groups, such as PAN, and devote resources to creating informal exchange networks, so that one representative could agree one touring price for a band in, say, five, locations. In particular expenses need to be subsidized. Most ticket receipts can cover a band fee of £400.00, but in addition there are the traveling expenses, accommodation, venue hire and marketing charges, which effectively double up the cost.
- An alternative would be to encourage the set-up of networks and give them an annual subsidy for everything except the band's fees. This would leave them with much less of a risk in terms of ticket receipts.
- We think it is a very bad idea to subsidise loss of income from events: we should encourage local groups to pour all their efforts into creating a successful event, knowing that certain basic costs are met and that they have a fair chance of ending up in the black, if they get the marketing right. Subsidising a blanket income shortfall encourages local promoters not to try.
- Local pools of staging, lighting and sound equipment could be set up, for modest hire to local promoters.
- In terms of music education, areas where certain instrumental traditions have totally lapsed would profit from bi-annual music scholarships, whereby a musician in residence could be financed, with a brief of extending the musical experience of children and adults over a defined area. This could be operated either through the local education authority, or sub-contracted to local voluntary organizations.

## **Marketing and Promotion**

What has worked for us is:

- Don't waste money on advertising. Instead write an article about your forthcoming event for your local newspaper, preferably accompanied by a photo. Most local newspapers are hungry for copy.
- Get your volunteers to hand-drop concert flyers through doors-this is the best way of getting a big audience.

- If you want to engage people with a cultural activity, teach it to all of them, adults and children, and complement your teaching with live demonstrations of the best artists in your line of work, as it were. Every concert we do provokes more interest in our classes and vice versa.
- If you want to teach a musical instrument, get hold of 30 instruments for both adults and children and run Come and Try events. People *say* they are not interested, but get the bit between their teeth with astonishing rapidity once they get an instrument in their hands.
- Get the best artists/ musicians you can find to run these events, and PAY THEM PROPERLY.
- Get the best teachers for your follow-up classes-and, guess what, pay them properly.

### **Encouraging creativity**

Get everyone involved-hands on experience all the time. Get the message across that art is FUN, culture is for everyone, not just those who are already educated. OK so the children are the future-but so are the adults. It won't work without their support.

at 11:30 AM ✓

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**Karen**

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**From:** Linda morpurgo [lindamorven@btopenworld.com]

**Sent:** 04 October 2004 14:40

**To:** info

**Subject:** Phase 1 Consultation[Scanned]

Dear Ian,

I attach the response of Lochgoilhead Fiddle Workshop, which is really my response, but realistically no-one else could take the time.

I'm sorry it's so long. If I hadn't been getting it out in such a hurry I would have edited it.

Hope some of it is useful.