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7 October 2004

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The Cultural Commission
Broughton High School
Carrington Rd.
Edinburgh
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Dear Sir,

Submission on the future of the Arts.

Get the foundation of your structure right and the rest of your building should be sound. Provide a sound base of Core Funding to an Arts organisation and its vision of what is possible within its sphere will be achieved, if not surpassed.

Cumbernauld theatre had the availability of funding from its 1995 level of £160k reduced to £107k in 1996, by our new local authority, North Lanarkshire Council (NLC), this excluded funding from the Scottish Arts Council (SAC). NLC. held our funding at that level for three years and in 2001 reduced it further to £79.9K at which level it has remained to date.

We have remained solvent by securing projects. These have allowed us to subsidise core costs within our organisation. Two years ago the S.A.C. recognised that that our situation was unsustainable in the near to long term future. They initiated tripartite discussions between theatre, NLC and SAC out of which a plan for change, was thought to have been agreed. The theatre has met every requirement asked of it except a substantial increase in core funding. In the past year SAC have increase their funding by £20K to £120K, NLC. has given us in kind support costing them £25K and benefiting our core funding by £12K. We have been unable to secure sufficient project funding over the past year to continue to subsidise our Core. We now face the closure of the theatre Trust by 31 Mar 05 unless additional funding can be secured.

This is the conundrum we ,you, face. How can Theatres and Arts organisations with a proven record of good management and artistic success who find themselves in situations such as this be properly funded.

1. Sac could have its role expanded to include the provision of core funding. This could be sourced by a reduction in grant to Local authorities plus a substantial increase in funding by Central Government. This would result in the loss of the local input by those councils which do recognise the value of the Arts to their communities.
2. Firm enforceable criteria may be a way to ensure Local Authorities are not only adequately supporting all aspects of the Arts in their area, but seeking to involve people in managing such enterprises.

Whatever means are applied, there must be a very considerable increase in funding if the Arts are to flourish in the way needed to meet the First Ministers publicly stated aim.

I have seen so many youngsters benefit from being part of our youth theatres and One in a Hundred Company. Participation has built their confidence in themselves and let them succeed in so many ways.

Yours faithfully,



Bill Taylor

Chair, Cumberland Theatre

PS. Will our celebration of our 25th anniversary, also be our swansong?.