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18th October ,04

The Cultural Commission,
Broughton High School
Carrington Road,
EDINBURGH EH4 1EG

21 Oct. 2004

Dear Sirs,

I am writing, somewhat belatedly, in reply to your letter in the Galloway Gazette where you asked for our views on the cultural future of Scotland - a very broad canvas.

First of all I would like to state my interest in music, of all kinds, except pop with its dreadful groups and a screaming noise which purports to be singing. Music in Scotland is wonderful from Scottish Dance music and folk song to orchestral concerts, ballet and opera and must not be dumbed down. In particular I am thinking of Scottish Opera which has been so shabbily treated by the Scottish Executive. We, in the remoter areas used to look forward to visits from groups of fine singers from the opera and they travelled the length and breadth of Scotland. When the Secretary of our Music Society tried to book them this year, she was told that they could no longer make these tours through lack of funds, and we finally had four fine voices from Welsh Opera. I see that the new Chairman is Bill Taylor who has asked for extra funds to save the chorus and has been turned down. When politicians can waste millions on the aggrandisement of their own position, it seems reprehensible that they should starve the arts. As a youngster at school I was taken to the Robert Msyer classical concerts and thus was taught and discovered the wonder of beautiful music. This should be available for all scottish children so that they grow up with a wide knowledge music as a whole. Why should they be deprived.

We have an excellent library here and of course Wigtown, our neighbour is now the Scottish Booktown. Books and the reading of books is all important. Floppy discs and the internet should never replace them.

I think my main plea is that arts and culture in Scotland should be maintained and supported. Hopefully among our MSPs there are some enlightened souls for whom such words as ,culture, and literacy are not taboo.

I don,t put my points very well but I hope you can glean something of my anxiety over future standards in Scotland.

Sincerely,