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Dear Mr Boyle

I read with interest your article in The Evening News on 29<sup>th</sup> September and I wonder if the following comments are relevant.

When you ask "what would you wish for the coming generation to make sure that all of our cultural resources are for the likes of them?" - my number one wish starts at primary school level and is that every child at school gets a proper music education, with the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, and at the very least to be able to read music, even at a basic level.

I have a daughter in P4 at a state primary school and in her class, only a chosen few children have been chosen to learn to play the violin - the rest of the class quite literally just miss out. If you multiply this across the country, whole generations of children are being denied a wonderful opportunity. And while some of us are able to afford private music lessons if we so wished, many families of course cannot afford this luxury.

I feel sure that this is partly a question of funding - if we provided every child with a violin, of course the cost would be phenomenal. But are there are ways around this?

- What about allowing a child trial lessons, with a view to seeing how much they liked it - not all would want to keep the lessons up but at least they would have had the opportunity to give it a try!
- Some parents may be willing to pay towards the cost - I would! So would many parents I know. (The costs should of course be free to families on benefits.)
- Or what about learning a recorder? The opportunity to learn to read music would still be there, and the instrument would be cheap!

This would need a massive investment by the Councils - I feel sure they are mainly concerned with reading, writing and maths skills for our children, but surely music and the arts should figure large in every child's world? Or else we will be raising a whole generation of children who think only of hip hop or rap when they think of music. We are a small nation, but we could lead the way within the UK or even Europe, given the opportunity.

My other concern is that this issue is one of class - particularly in Edinburgh, with the pressure for many middle class parents for send their children to private schools. I have taken my own child to the Classics for Children concerts at The Usher Hall, and I would be willing to bet that a large percentage of the children there attended a private school. But this could change! How wonderful it would be if a child from a deprived background wanted to go to that concert; how wonderful it would be if there were subsidised tickets for schools (and even more wonderful if it

were free!) More investment in teaching music in schools could open such horizons and make such a difference to children's musical tastes.

I had the great luck of having a father who was a music teacher, and a mother who was an art teacher, so I had the advantage of being exposed at an early age to music and the arts. I hope to continue this with my own children. I believe music is vital to a child's development - and I wish and hope that improved music tuition for every single child in this country can be achieved, so that the foundations for a love of music can be built from an early age.

Yours sincerely

V Evans

Viveca Evans (Mrs)