

Cultural Commission: Phase 1 Consultation**Submission by the Royal Scottish National Orchestra****Education: How do we develop artistic, cultural and social skills and provide cultural knowledge?**

The key to education in the arts is to enable appreciation, participation and creation of artistic activity. There is ample research which testifies to the effect of arts activity in schools on other learning and social skills, but it is vital that the three strands of learning are included. Appreciation of the arts is important, but it is much more important that children should learn by doing: by playing musical instruments themselves, and by creating (composing) music to develop their self-confidence, innovation and enterprise.

The RSNO has an excellent track-record in delivering innovative education projects to very different groups of people and in very wide ranging parts of Scotland. But our ambition is to increase this programme to the extent where schoolchildren of all ages and adults who are normally excluded from such activities as music-making and the appreciation of music have an equal chance to participate in what the orchestra has to offer and to access all of the programmes and performances delivered by the orchestra. Arts organisations like the RSNO are already doing amazingly effective work in schools which would not be possible without the contribution of arts organisations under the current curriculum guidelines and pressures on teachers' time. An important part of what we do is to train the teachers themselves, so that they are better equipped to provide this vital strand of education for the pupils. This means that over the years a legacy is built up which ultimately makes the schools much more self-sufficient, while still depending on the orchestra for the input of our musicians and the life-changing experience of hearing the symphony orchestra in concert.

The RSNO's education programme is delivered by its full-time musicians, and involves the support of many of our major stakeholders, including local authorities, corporate sponsors and charitable trusts. All of this is funding which would not otherwise support the orchestra. By involving the stakeholders in the programme we can ensure that there is a need and demand for what we are delivering.

To continue the vital work that the RSNO and organisations like it undertake, there is a need to enable all schools and community groups to access such work. This would, in our opinion, best be done by providing funding to the schools themselves to buy in the projects, whilst setting guidelines to them to achieve a minimum standard in the provision of arts activity to all school pupils and community group participants. The welcome news that the Scottish Executive is providing £17.5 million towards music education for young children reaffirms the commitment made in its Cultural Policy Statement. We at the RSNO are interested in providing a service of the best quality in classical music, and this additional funding will enhance our work in this area.

Institutional infrastructure: How best to provide cultural facilities and ensure the widest access?

The RSNO has an open mind with respect to the optimum infrastructure required to deliver the maximum value for money. We have a productive ongoing relationship with the SAC, but we are aware of the limitations that are placed on that organisation because of the needs of the larger arts organisations such as ourselves and the limited funds available. ~~What is essential for a national company such as the RSNO, however, is to be funded by an organisation which has a national overview of what is required, and the capacity to respond to national, regional and local needs where appropriate. For successful delivery of orchestral music and education projects throughout Scotland, it is vital that funding for the core activity (ie orchestral concerts) is provided at national level, and for local projects (education and outreach) at local level.~~

The delivery of services and access to them: How best to provide cultural facilities and ensure the widest access?

For a symphony orchestra Scotland has a challenge in that there are relatively few venues across the country which can accommodate 90+ musicians and an audience. It is natural therefore that the main-scale performances will be limited to the larger population centres, but there are many smaller halls which can accommodate smaller groups from the orchestra. ~~The economic reality, however, is that smaller venues are normally further from base, and concerts therefore cost more to promote, whilst yielding less in ticket sales. The RSNO has played in Stranraer, Fort William, Oban, Kirkcaldy, Irvine, Largs, Kilmarnock, Dunfermline, Galashiels and Dumfries in recent years, but an expansion of this programme to include venues further from the central belt would require additional funding. Audiences for the RSNO in these venues are always large and enthusiastic, and it is clear that more regular appearances would be welcomed by the local populations. It is essential that suitable venues are located in every part of Scotland which wishes to access cultural activity.~~

Local
tours

~~The RSNO's funding enable us to offer a concessionary pricing policy, which ensures ease of access to everyone.~~

Marketing and Promotion: How to increase and broaden the profile of the audience and the public engaging with cultural activity in Scotland?

The RSNO markets its activities through television, radio, print, internet technology, viral campaigns, direct mail, email lists and SMS text messaging. ~~We are severely hampered by the lack of co-ordination of ticketing facilities and particularly internet ticketing across Scotland. Successful integration of such services nationwide may need government intervention to ensure that the public have full access to all cultural activities.~~

Box
office

~~We are currently trying to find new audiences for the orchestra by developing a new strand of performances specifically designed to introduce audiences to orchestral music. Our Season Sampler concert, Classic Bites, which attracted a sell-out audience to the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall in September, is the first in this series. We will be following up contact with this audience to encourage them to attend other concerts during the Season.~~

Encouraging Creativity: What is the best way to maximise the creative potential of the people of Scotland?

The best way to maximise creative potential is to invest in the education system (see above) and ensure that every child's education includes a creative element. This needs to be supplied by arts practitioners: in our case musicians, who are specially trained to encourage creativity in others. Such opportunities should, however, also be available to adults throughout Scotland.

The concept of "cultural rights for the Scottish citizen, and those of its creative community".

The cultural rights of a citizen include their right to appreciate, participate in and create culture. In musical terms, this means the following:

Appreciate: All citizens should have the right to listen to live music on a regular basis, including orchestral and chamber repertoire. This also implies that all citizens should be introduced to music at an early age and have the opportunity to learn more about it. In this context it is also important that the national companies, for example, are enabled to provide for the Scottish public performances of international standard both to showcase what is best and in order to set a standard to which others can aspire.

Participate: All citizens should have the right to participate in musical activities, either by learning an instrument or joining a local group such as a choir, orchestra, wind ensemble or drumming group. For this to happen there needs to be an infrastructure of instrumental teaching and local arts provision throughout Scotland.

Create: In order for Scotland to become a truly creative nation, all citizens need to have the opportunity to create music themselves. In order to provide the background of confidence which would lead to this objective, all citizens would require access to arts practitioners with specific skills in assisting people in the creation of music.

The overwhelming implication of "cultural rights" is that significantly increased funding will be required to enable citizens to realise these rights and take advantage of them. This is greatly to be welcomed.

lan

From: Simon Crookall [Simon.Crookall@rsno.org.uk]
Sent: 23 September 2004 16:01
To: info
Subject: Phase 1 Submission from RSNO[Scanned]

Dear James

Further to your recent letter concerning Phase One of the Cultural Commission's consultation process, I enclose a submission from the RSNO under the headings requested. The RSNO is currently updating its 3-year plan, and we will be forwarding this to you once it is completed.

Best wishes


Simon

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