

## **Scottish Ballet – response to Cultural Commission consultation January 2005**

### **Part one – response to the interim report**

The Interim Report of October 2004 speaks of three principle themes, namely Rights and Responsibilities, Developing Talent and Raising the Potential. Scottish Ballet's work encompasses all of these areas, enabling us to raise some specific issues that are inhibiting the development of cultural provision and cultural engagement in Scotland.

In looking at the issues that face the company as it continues to strive to address the three themes detailed in the report, Scottish Ballet would also like to acknowledge the strong and enduring partnerships that have been developed, most notably with Glasgow City Council, but also with private sector sponsors, whose support have enabled the company to make the progress that it has over the past years.

#### **1. Rights & Entitlements**

However this is ultimately defined this relates to the joint issues of demand and access. It brings a focus not just to the rights to participation, which in dance is showing significant growth in a wide range of manifestations of the art form but also to the rights to access excellence and innovation.

##### **Demand for Scottish Ballet**

Research indicates that a venue needs to programme a minimum of 6 professional dance productions each year in order to sustain an audience for dance (Scottish Arts Council Dance Audience Research, 2002). This is only just being achieved at the large-scale venues with visiting companies from elsewhere in the UK and abroad supplementing Scottish Ballet productions. Few middle-scale venues reach the minimum number and virtually no small-scale venues are able to achieve this. Only by increasing the critical mass in provision will audiences for dance be sustained and further increased.

Scottish Ballet's activity in Scotland is mainly limited to the large-scale venues in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness, although even at this scale Scottish Ballet has insufficient resources to provide these venues with the range of repertoire they need to further develop the audience – the venues would like at least two full-length ballets each year, whereas Scottish Ballet can only afford to present one, alongside a programme of shorter works (which are cheaper to produce and tour).

*For details of production and touring in 2004/05 and 2005/06, please see the attached Appendix.*

In addition there is clear demand for ballet at middle- and small-scale venues, as evidenced by the Scottish Arts Council's Touring Development Study (Bonnar Keenlyside, 2000). SAC is currently in the process of commissioning a major research programme (Audiences Scotland) to assess audience demand for the arts across the whole of Scotland. This involves detailed market research with a significant number of people, making it the most in-depth and statistically robust research to date. A precursor to this was a piece of research undertaken by Morris Hargreaves Macintyre in Dumfries & Galloway in 2001/02. This revealed that 4% of

the population of Dumfries & Galloway attends ballet, but that a further 19% would like to attend if it was available in their area. This underscores the importance of Scottish Ballet being resourced to produce and tour work to rural areas, but it also suggests that there is demand for ballet from 23% of the Scottish population, which is significant.

The challenge is this: in order to reach communities across Scotland, Scottish Ballet needs to be able to create and tour appropriate programmes to suit the varied network of venues – work designed for large-scale venues rarely can be accommodated at middle and small-scale venues. The only way small/middle-scale touring could be achieved on current funding levels is by decreasing the number of visits to large-scale venues, thereby weakening their already fragile dance programmes.

Investment in Scottish Ballet has lagged behind investment in the other performing arts in Scotland over many years. This may have been understandable and arguably justified during the 1990s and early 2000s when the company lacked artistic strength and strategic focus; however, the remarkable transformation in the company over the past two years (recognised and evidenced through major national awards, widespread critical acclaim, new audiences, and Scottish Ballet's first invitation to the Edinburgh International Festival in nearly 20 years) demands that the level of public funding invested in Scottish Ballet be reviewed. Indeed, the Scottish Arts Council's own review of core-funded organisations undertaken in 2001/02 concluded that in order to maximise potential, Scottish Ballet's core funding required an uplift of 33% (from £3m to £4m p.a.). Some of this would help to increase production and touring to a level that takes full advantage of the company's capacity (i.e. Scottish Ballet has capacity to perform/tour at least 20 weeks p.a. but is currently achieving only 14 weeks p.a. because of insufficient production and touring resources). But some of this additional investment is required in order to meet costs that have been rising above the rate of inflation – e.g. staff costs such as union pay agreements, working time directive; production costs – level of fees commanded to create/produce work; touring costs – travel, transport, accommodation; overheads – insurances, maintenance, and issues relating to legislation).

SAC's limited resources and existing funding relationships have precluded the step-change in core funding to date, although as an interim measure SAC has demonstrated its commitment to supporting the company through several additional one-off grants from its Lottery fund. This has enabled Scottish Ballet to develop new repertoire over the past two years, which has been fundamental to the company's renewal – however, SAC's inability to build this into Scottish Ballet's core funding, and the significant reduction in SAC's Lottery income, means that Scottish Ballet is going into 2005/06 with its production and touring resources seriously depleted.

### **Education and participation**

In addition to its performance work, Scottish Ballet runs a comprehensive education and outreach programme, with a significant participatory element. Activity currently takes place across 12 local authority areas, with a very significant amount of work taking place in Glasgow due to the support and commitment of the City Council. This work in the city has a long history that demonstrates the impact investment can have in growing demand and developing access.

*For details of current education activities, see Appendix*

Scottish Ballet has been delivering dance participation programmes and projects for a number of years and, to some extent, has been filling significant gaps in local dance provision. There is a seemingly insatiable demand on Scottish Ballet, from across Scotland, to run dance classes and participation projects, with the result that education work directly related to the core activity of the company – i.e. producing and presenting high quality ballet – has been marginalised to some extent. Scottish Ballet is not geared up to service such demand nor is it really within the main remit of a ballet company to be running community dance development projects – for example, the company was recently invited to tender to run a dance development project in South Ayrshire focusing on streetdance and traditional dance, and although we're pleased that our reputation for delivering high quality education work attracted this interest, streetdance and traditional dance are outwith our primary area of expertise.

There is a real opportunity for Scottish Ballet to reposition and develop our education work, but this can only be achieved if we are able to release ourselves from filling gaps in formal education/community arts provision, which in turn means that further investment is required in the companies such as Ydance that do have expertise in running community dance projects.

Within the formal education system, there is a critical need to strengthen dance within the curriculum. This includes general participation for creative, social and physical development and fitness, but also in relation to nurturing talent and developing awareness of potential career opportunities for dancers, choreographers, designers and technicians. People need to be able to see ballet/dance and to feel entitled to like it or not – but this requires regular exposure to a range of dance styles, which must start when people are young (and therefore through school). Lifelong interest is usually sparked by a transformational, life-changing experience – and this is often linked to contact with professional artists/companies through either performances in schools or school trips to the local theatre. With appropriate resources, there is scope for Scottish Ballet to develop dance productions specifically for touring to schools to complement its existing programme of matinee performances for schools.

## **2. Developing Talent**

There is a critical need to develop vocational training in Scotland for young people who wish to become professional dancers and choreographers. Scotland has one specialist high school for dance (the Dance School of Scotland, at Knightswood Secondary School in Glasgow) but there is currently no opportunity at Further/Higher Education level to train to professional standard in ballet. This is despite the fact that Scottish Ballet offers the majority of job opportunities in Scotland for professional dancers wishing to pursue a performance career. There is considerable scope for Scottish Ballet to be a partner in developing vocational training, which could include an apprentice/training company working alongside the main company. This company could significantly help in meeting demand for touring to small and medium sized venues as demonstrated by the work currently undertaken by a company such as Ballet Central in England.

Developing dance talent requires not only access to vocational training, but also regular opportunities to create and perform. Even Scotland's only two full-time professional dance companies (Scottish Ballet and Scottish Dance Theatre) are unable to provide their dancers with enough opportunities to perform, despite demand from promoters across Scotland for regular performances of high quality

dance. This is because of the wide-ranging nature and scale of the network of performance venues across Scotland and the cost involved in producing the necessary range of work, as well as touring across a complex geographical area and a disparate population.

### **3. Realising the Potential**

Dance culture in Scotland is small and underdeveloped, compared with other performing arts in Scotland (i.e. music and drama) and in relation to dance elsewhere in the UK, especially in England. The quantity and range of high quality work is limited, and therefore audience development is slow. This relates directly to the relatively low level of public funding that is invested in dance.

Nevertheless, there seems to be considerable potential, as evidenced by the remarkable transformation of Scottish Ballet over the past two years. Scotland may only have two full-time dance companies, but both have won major UK awards in the past year, regularly receive widespread critical and public acclaim, and are attracting international interest.

However, in order for this to continue, professional dancers and companies need to be better supported to create, present and tour work in Scotland and beyond. Moreover, there is an urgent need to underpin this with an appropriate infrastructure for dance within the formal education system, vocational training and continuing professional development.

A relatively modest investment in the sector could have significant results in terms of meeting demand and providing access, as well as offering the opportunities for further growth in talent and building on the strong base that is now being achieved in terms of realising potential.

Scottish Ballet is the fourth largest ballet company in the UK and the only one that regularly serves audiences across Scotland. Scottish Ballet also tours elsewhere in the UK and is seeking to increase its activity abroad. Over the past four years, Arts Council England (ACE) has significantly increased its investment in the three largest ballet companies based there – the Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet, and English National Ballet. Because of its regional base, repertoire range and touring remit, Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) has been recognised by SAC as the benchmark comparator for Scottish Ballet. BRB's core funding from ACE has increased by nearly £1m over the past four years, from over £5.7m in 2001/02 to £6.7m in 2005/06. On top of that, BRB receives a substantial annual grant from its local authority, in excess of £900k p.a. (Northern Ballet Theatre, based in Leeds, receives in the region of £400k p.a. from local authorities in the West Yorkshire area. Scottish Ballet receives about £60,000 pa from local authorities in Scotland). In terms of the size of the company (BRB has 60 dancers, compared with Scottish Ballet's 36) and level of activity (number of touring weeks/performances), Scottish Ballet achieves 60% of BRB's output. Although this may be a crude measure, a proportionate level of grant funding would see Scottish Ballet's core arts council funding at £4.02m.

## **Part two – response to the pan-sectoral consultation questions**

### **1. Rights, Entitlements and Responsibilities**

In considering the practical implications of developing a more explicit approach to establishing rights, entitlements and responsibilities there are lessons to be learnt from international comparators. Any move to enshrine specific entitlements in law would seem to open up dangers of developing new forms of exclusion. If rights are to include rights to education, participation, excellence and innovation then this is more about enabling policies and approaches than directive legal provisions. It is also about partnerships developing that are varied and multi-hued thereby allowing new multi-art/multi-cultural provision, such as the development of Tramway in Glasgow, to be as much a part of this as more traditional forms of rights such as access to traditional performances in traditional spaces, or to education as part of the core curriculum.

### **2. Cultural Leadership**

In considering the need for cultural leadership, this is not about a search for a single cultural leader, which is in itself a rather frightening prospect, but more about developing the thinking, imagination and skill of a wide range of people who can take a role in cultural leadership. If you look at the work that Glasgow City Council has both led and enabled you can see how sustained investment in the arts and culture, as part of its core policy of building sustainable communities, has led to a wider range of people being engaged in different forms of cultural leadership. The statutory authorities, such as the Council, play an essential enabling role, helping to gain focus on the role of culture and the arts in community building, but not taking the traditional leadership role that seeks to provide all the answers thereby running the risk of alienating rather than engaging with particularly disadvantaged groups.

Traditional models of heroic leadership, whilst attractive in the short term, will not in the long term bring about the sort of change and growth that is desired. A model of leadership such as that described by Ron Heifetz in "Leadership without Easy Answers" is much more likely to result in the growth of cultural leadership across the communities of Scotland that would seem to be desirable. To develop such a model the continuation of some form of arms-length enabling body would seem to be the most effective, as growing diversity in cultural leadership needs itself to be sponsored by a body that brings together diverse groups and perspectives. Such a body should seek to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including artists and cultural workers, alongside the statutory, voluntary, private and commercial sectors. This could be achieved through active outreach work, much as is now demanded of the companies currently funded by the Arts Council. However, the role that Local Authorities play as both leaders and enablers should not be underplayed and ways of developing more consistency across the country, so that the excellence that is achieved by some can be replicated, should be encouraged.

### **3. Planning**

Whilst Community Planning is still in its early stages of development, the core role of Community Planning partnerships should be given more consideration in this context. Regeneration is a central focus for Community Planning and the approach to regeneration that we should be adopting nationally brings together economic development, social regeneration and cultural development in a comprehensive

package. Where this approach is being taken in a range of European and US examples, research and evaluation shows the results in the growth of communities and the growth of their engagement in a wide range of cultural activities. These communities also support sustained economic growth and social change and development, leading to more vibrant artistic and cultural life as well as greater prosperity and improved quality of life.

For planning in Scotland to grow on a more integrated basis policy around the inclusion of arts and culture Community Planning would seem to be key.

#### **4. Funding**

The central challenge on funding is moving to funding regimes that have longer timescales thereby allowing for planning and development to take place over sustained periods of time. Whilst project funding has enabled some exciting and innovative work to take place, and there should be room for this type of experimentation, this does need to be balanced by longer term commitments, preferably with minimum 5 year time horizons, thereby allowing companies and communities engaged in the provision of arts and culture to really build momentum and demonstrate value.

#### **5. Local Authorities**

As stated above, Local Authorities play and should continue to play a central role in the leadership and development of arts and culture. Places such as Glasgow that have invested significantly over time in arts and culture as part of their approach to social inclusion, can provide valuable evidence of the positive impact that such engagement and support can engender. The key challenge is in spreading best practice, and using local initiatives to act as catalysts for national growth and development.

#### **6. The role of National companies**

The debate about the role of National Companies has tended to centre on their representative role, and has led in some instances to a sterile debate about the value of different forms of cultural activity.

National companies seem to us to have a number of critical roles:

- Bringing specific forms of art and culture to the widest possible audiences across Scotland.
- Providing examples of excellence, innovation and creativity that ensure that Scotland remains a leader and not just a follower as a centre of culture.
- Actively supporting the development of Scottish artists from across the art forms.
- Actively supporting participation and education, from both a general educational perspective and a vocational and professional perspective.
- Acting as ambassadors for Scotland, through touring outside Scotland and bringing in international artists to enrich the work within Scotland.
- Acting as catalysts and leaders for their sector with a commitment to the development of the sector in Scotland. (Scottish Ballet has just begun to take this role and has led the submission of a sector response to the Commission on this basis)

National companies also have a significant role at a local level in working with communities to enrich and develop cultural provision. Active encouragement of partnerships between Councils and national organisations, such as the partnership of Glasgow City Council with Scottish Ballet, can provide the critical base for national companies to explore new ways of working like the multi-arts work that is being planned at Tramway, as well as ensuring that they are grounded and part of a real and identifiable local community in addition to being part of the national community of Scotland.

Scottish Ballet would be pleased to be involved in further discussions with the Cultural Commission on these and other issues.

Zoë van Zwanenberg  
Chair  
Scottish Ballet

## **Appendix activity**

## **Details of Scottish Ballet current and planned**

### **Performance/production & touring**

Although activity will fluctuate from year-to-year depending on opportunities and finances, in a typical year Scottish Ballet produces and tours three programmes.

In 2004/05 Scottish Ballet is presenting the following:

#### **Spring 2004 Tour**

Repertoire: George Balanchine *The Four Temperaments*  
Peter Darrell *Five Ruckert Songs*  
Stephen Petronio *MiddleSex Gorge* (revival)  
Ashley Page *32 Cryptograms*  
Ashley Page *Acrid Avid Jam* (revival)  
Ashley Page *Soft Underbelly* (revival)

Venues: Edinburgh Festival Theatre  
Glasgow Theatre Royal  
Eden Court, Inverness  
(nb: *His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen, closed*)

#### **Autumn 2004 Tour**

Repertoire: William Forsyth *Suite from Artifact* (world premiere)  
Hans van Manen *Two Pieces for Het*  
Hans van Manen *Twilight*  
Ashley Page *Nightswimming into day* (world premiere)

Venues: Edinburgh Festival Theatre  
Glasgow Theatre Royal  
Eden Court Theatre, Inverness  
The Space, Dundee  
(nb: *His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen, closed*)

#### **Christmas 2004/05**

Repertoire: Ashley Page *The Nutcracker* (revival)

Venues: Edinburgh Festival Theatre  
Glasgow Theatre Royal  
Eden Court, Inverness  
(nb: *His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen, closed*)

**In 2005/06, Scottish Ballet is planning:**

- Spring 2005 Tour (repertoire – some new and some revival) to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness

- Edinburgh International Festival
- Autumn 2005 Tour – HMT re-opening plus two weeks UK touring (outside of Scotland)
- Christmas 05/05 – new *Cinderella* by Ashley Page to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, other UK (*nb: Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, closed*)

**In 2006/07, Scottish Ballet is planning:**

- Small/middle-scale tour
- Large-scale tour
- Christmas – revival of *Cinderella*

**UK/overseas**

Scottish Ballet regularly tours elsewhere in the UK, but this is largely dependent on support from Cross Border Touring to cover marginal costs. On the basis of the current CBT scheme, Scottish Ballet is unlikely to secure more than 3 weeks p.a. – although demand far outstrips this.

Scottish Ballet also occasionally tours abroad, but this depends on the marginal costs being covered. Festival/tour promoters would generally cover costs once the company has arrived – but all travel, to and from, needs to be met by the company.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Scottish Ballet runs a comprehensive education and outreach programme, including:

- classes and six in-house dance groups, which cater for a wide range of people at Scottish Ballet's studios in Glasgow
- workshops in schools across Scotland
- Summer Schools, Easter and October holiday courses
- in-service training for teachers
- education resource packs
- performance projects
- residencies
- pre-performance talks and "behind-the-scenes" insight events

In 2003/04, these Education activities attracted a total attendance of 34,556, and reached the following local authority areas:

Aberdeen  
Aberdeenshire  
Dumfries & Galloway  
Dundee  
East Renfrewshire  
Edinburgh  
Glasgow  
Highland  
South Lanarkshire  
Stirling  
Midlothian  
West Lothian

**Dance4Glasgow** – a programme funded through Glasgow City Council's New Opportunities funding for PE and Sport (NOPES), covering:

- 50 after-school clubs
- Saturday Classes
- Easter/October Days of Dance
- Theatre Matinee Visits
- Children's' Performance

**Associates Scheme** – a programme for young people in P5, P6, S2, S3 and S4 who wish to train to a high standard with a view to pursuing a career in dance. Although activities are held at Scottish Ballet studios in Glasgow, **participants come from 25 local authority areas across Scotland.**