



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 11 September 2012

Session 4

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**Tuesday 11 September 2012**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>INTERESTS</b> .....	1337
<b>MUSIC PARTICIPATION (CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE)</b> .....	1338
<b>CULTURAL PARTICIPATION</b> .....	1357

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**EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting 2012, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

Stewart Maxwell (West Scotland) (SNP)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Neil Findlay (Lothian) (Lab)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

\*Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP)

\*Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab)

\*Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP)

\*Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD)

\*Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)

\*Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)

Francis Cummings (Sistema Scotland)

Fiona Dalgetty (Fèis Rois)

Fiona Ferguson (Imaginate)

Robert Livingston (HI-Arts)

Julie Tait (Culture Sparks)

Mark Traynor (Educational Institute of Scotland)

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 3



## Scottish Parliament

### Education and Culture Committee

*Tuesday 11 September 2012*

[The Deputy Convener *opened the meeting at 10:00*]

### Interests

**The Deputy Convener (Neil Findlay):** Good morning and welcome to the 22nd meeting of the Education and Culture Committee in 2012. I remind members and those in the public gallery to switch off their mobile phones and other electronic devices so that they do not interfere with the broadcasting system.

We have apologies from the convener, Stewart Maxwell, and I welcome Colin Beattie to the committee as his substitute. Colin, do you have any interests to declare before we proceed?

**Colin Beattie (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP):** Just for clarity, I should say that, when the subject of the participation in music came up when I was a councillor in Midlothian Council, I took a position against the cuts in music tuition.

## Music Participation (Children and Young People)

10:01

**The Deputy Convener:** Our first item this morning is an evidence-taking session on the participation of children and young people in music. We will be focusing on the youth music initiative and on charging for school music tuition.

This is part of a series of one-off evidence-taking sessions on cultural issues that the committee is holding in advance of a question-and-answer session with Fiona Hyslop, the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs. Later this morning, we will take evidence on differences in levels of cultural participation across Scotland.

I welcome to the committee Mark Traynor, who is the convener of the Educational Institute of Scotland's instrumental music teachers network; Fiona Dalgetty, the chief executive of Fèis Rois—I hope everyone heard that pronunciation—and Francis Cummings, the director of Sistema Scotland's big noise project in Raploch.

I invite members to ask questions.

**Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con):** The committee has been presented with a raft of evidence on the issues before us, which have been in the news over the past 10 days or so. Do you have any thoughts on why there is such a wide range of positions across the local authorities, with some making no charge for additional instrumental tuition and some making charges that range from £95 to £340? What are the reasons for those huge differences?

**Mark Traynor (Educational Institute of Scotland):** Budget constraints are causing huge issues for local authorities across Scotland. Authorities clearly see an opportunity to generate income that will subsidise instrumental music services, which we in the EIS feel is inappropriate in the Scottish education system. The real problem is that the budgetary pressure that local authorities are under is causing them huge difficulties in balancing their books, and they obviously see instrumental music as an easy target.

**Liz Smith:** Do you detect that there are specific formulas by which local authorities set the charges? Do the charges relate just to costs? How do the local authorities decide what the costs should be?

**Mark Traynor:** We are not aware of how the policy is implemented or how the figures are decided on.

**Liz Smith:** What categories of youngsters are exempt from the charges?

**Mark Traynor:** The national picture is varied. There is no national structure for instrumental music. The exempted categories vary across the country but can include those in receipt of free school meals, income support or clothing grants. There is no set formula in place.

**Liz Smith:** It varies across local authorities.

**Mark Traynor:** Yes.

**Liz Smith:** Mr Traynor, you and some of your EIS colleagues have expressed grave reservations about the fact that Scottish Qualifications Authority tuition can be very expensive for families with more than one child learning an expensive instrument. Are the fees compromising the way youngsters choose subjects and, indeed, putting some of them off?

**Mark Traynor:** Although we have no evidence for that, I imagine that that will be a very important factor in pupils' subject choice. We are becoming alarmed by the fact that five authorities have removed exemptions for SQA examinations—indeed, Aberdeenshire Council has announced that it will remove exemptions from 2013-14 onwards—and by the growing trend of charging parents and pupils for curriculum-based subjects.

**Liz Smith:** Has any reason been given for why those exemptions have been removed and why charges are now being made?

**Mark Traynor:** I can only assume that, again, it is another way of generating income to subsidise the instrumental service.

**Jean Urquhart (Highlands and Islands) (SNP):** First of all, I should declare an interest. I was involved with the fèis movement from the early 1980s up until five or six years ago.

I read in the weekend's press reports a quite sensational headline about profits. I wonder whether you can confirm something that I picked up from the information in our papers. Did EIS's freedom of information request relate to net income after deducting legal and—if I remember correctly—administration costs, but not teaching costs?

**Mark Traynor:** Not teaching, no.

**Jean Urquhart:** On the one hand, the figures look like profits but, given that there is no commonality among a lot of the provision in schools, we are not comparing like with like.

**Mark Traynor:** The EIS sees instrumental music tuition as being for all and believes that no costs should be involved. Looking at the matter from that angle, we think that profits are being generated. In education, we do not take into

account teachers' salaries in the classroom and therefore we do not think that this aspect should be included in considering an educational right of our young people. We think that the income generated by charging parents is being seen as a possible profit revenue.

**Jean Urquhart:** There must be a huge difference in provision from one school to the next, irrespective of how—or, indeed, whether—an authority charges. As a result, we are not necessarily comparing like with like when we compare authorities that have a policy of charging and those that do not.

**Mark Traynor:** That is the difficulty in there not being a national framework. At the moment, resources are stretched, which means that, from school to school and authority to authority, there will be differences in the number of staff involved.

**Clare Adamson (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I am interested in SQA music courses. In most situations—probably 99 per cent of the time—children would choose their standard grade subject in second year. As a result, the fact that they were studying for an SQA course would be established and local authorities would provide exemptions from charging. Might there be complications with the variations in curriculum for excellence, given that some schools might have a two plus two plus two model and others a three plus three model? Might some students be charged for a longer time until they determine whether they will sit that exam?

**Mark Traynor:** We have seen some evidence that authorities are removing exemptions further up or down the scale. Those taking the three plus three approach are removing the exemption from third year. Previously, the pupil would have chosen their subject at the end of second year, which would have meant an exemption for the third and fourth year of SQA examinations. Once again, the cost is being passed on to parents.

**The Deputy Convener:** Given that the focus of much of this evidence session will be on that issue, I just point out that, if any of the other witnesses have anything to add, they should feel free to do so—although they are not compelled to.

**Clare Adamson:** Just to be clear, is there any evidence that the youth music initiative money, which has specific objectives attached, is being used to subsidise the curriculum in schools?

**Mark Traynor:** From the EIS perspective, the YMI is to be applauded but, as our members are not directly involved in it, we do not have a lot of information on it. In general, I believe that YMI money might have been used to subsidise core services, although we do not have any actual evidence of that.

**Fiona Dalgetty (Fèis Rois):** Speaking from my knowledge of YMI in Highland, I know that the situation that Clare Adamson describes is definitely not the case there. Highland Council has a relationship with Fèisean nan Gàidheal, our umbrella organisation, and Fèis Rois. The council subcontracts a large part of the YMI, and we deliver it for the primary 5 and 6 target group in 108 primaries.

**Marco Biagi (Edinburgh Central) (SNP):** My question follows on from the points that Liz Smith and Jean Urquhart made. The thing that surprised me most in the recent coverage was the issue about charging for SQA courses. I understand that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities was invited to this meeting but has refused to come. I regret that, because I would have asked it this question, but instead I will ask it of the witnesses who are here. In what way is it legal for councils to charge for core curriculum certificated courses? Is the situation in any way ambiguous? If a council was to charge for higher English, there would be an outcry, but a number of councils now charge for other SQA certificated courses.

**Mark Traynor:** The EIS cannot comment on the legalities of the decisions that local authorities make, but I have to agree that, if the same formula was applied to English, maths or sciences, there would be uproar among the public.

**The Deputy Convener:** I add just as a comment that, through my casework this week, I have found out that a similar situation has arisen with home economics. There is wide variation in the charges that are applied by schools in the same local authority area.

**Liam McArthur (Orkney Islands) (LD):** I echo Marco Biagi's comment on COSLA. The witnesses have been asked a number of questions that would be more appropriately directed to COSLA. Likewise, I share many of the reservations that have been expressed in relation to charging those who are undertaking SQA qualifications.

In Orkney, which has been identified as one of the councils that is not charging, there has been a live debate in the past 12 months about whether to deviate from that approach and introduce charging. Although SQA certificated students were excluded from that, the interesting thing is that one reason why the issue was pushed off the agenda was that, however the council calibrated it, the sums that would have been raised were small in comparison with the overall costs of tuition in Orkney, which is the smallest council area in the country.

My question follows on from Jean Urquhart's question. Given the sums that are being raised, the use of the word "profit" is not at all clear to me. How would the EIS define profit? Is it anything that

is raised, or is it only a proportion of what is raised excluding salaries and so on?

**Mark Traynor:** The question that we asked local authorities in the FOI request was how much net revenue they generate through charging. We have presented in our written submission the figures that we received back. We believe that the figures are detrimental to instrumental music and access for all. As I said, the EIS's stance is that we believe that instrumental music should be free to all, and we see the money as profit that local authorities are making to plough back into their budgets to shore up and subsidise their instrumental service budgets.

**Liam McArthur:** I have seen the FOI request. Following on from that, have you made any attempt to assess how the figures were arrived at?

**Mark Traynor:** No.

**Liam McArthur:** We certainly know that in Orkney, because it was such a controversial issue, the council was at pains to set out clearly where it felt that the fees could be introduced, where they absolutely should not be introduced and what the fees would be in comparison with the costs it bore. Is that not the experience in other council areas?

10:15

**Mark Traynor:** It is not something that we have pursued. It is something that we would ask Parliament to look at, perhaps in a review of instrumental services throughout Scotland. Given that there is such disparity in exemptions and charging, we need a clearer picture of the situation nationwide before we can start to make any assumptions or assertions about the direction in which we want to take instrumental music.

**Liam McArthur:** I appreciate that most of that is probably for the councils.

**Joan McAlpine (South Scotland) (SNP):** I realise that your FOI request related to the current situation, but can any of the panel enlighten us as to the historical situation regarding charging for musical tuition? Was there a point in the past when it was all free?

**Francis Cummings (Sistema Scotland):** I grew up in Scotland and started my musical career in my local authority, and at that point it was all free. I was also a junior student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland—the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, as it was then—which was also free. Historically, there was a time when all instrumental tuition was free.

**Mark Traynor:** You would need to go back a considerable way—

**Francis Cummings:** You make me feel old.

**Mark Traynor:** I remember that when I was at school—20-odd years ago—musical tuition was free, but you would need to go back a considerable way to find free instrumental tuition. Although the information on it is not available, which takes us back to the issue of transparency of instrumental music services, the charges that authorities levy on parents are slowly starting to creep up. As budgetary constraints start to kick in, councils see the charges as a way of generating income to subsidise the service, but the EIS does not agree with that.

**Colin Beattie:** A key part of the youth music initiative is school-based music making. The aim was to ensure that schoolchildren access at least one year's free music tuition by the time that they reach primary 6. Has that outcome been achieved?

**Fiona Dalgetty:** I can speak only for the areas in which Fèis Rois works but, to my knowledge, it has.

Highland Council has chosen to deliver that provision in three areas. It offers the Kodály method, which is delivered by the local authority instructors, to children in primaries 3 and 4, and the fèis movement delivers to children in primaries 5 and 6. For 12 weeks a year, every pupil in primary 5 gets two blocks of six weeks of tuition.

The schools choose from Gaelic song, Scots song and tin whistle group music making, and that is all linked with the level 2 outcomes and experiences for the curriculum for excellence for the expressive arts as well as some of the cross-cutting themes. Where possible, the music is also linked with the class topic. For example, if the class is studying the Jacobites, we will look at Jacobite songs, take them to the battlefield and link that in with the music. Our professional musicians and tutors who go into schools work closely with the class teachers. We are also about to deliver in Dumfries and Galloway.

Some local authorities are using the same model and are bringing in a cultural partner—maybe a foundation organisation of Creative Scotland—to work with them to achieve that target.

**Colin Beattie:** Do we have any knowledge about whether there is uniformity in approach? I hear what you say about the area with which you are familiar, but there are 32 local authorities. Are there 32 different approaches, or is there a uniform approach to achieving that single outcome?

**Fiona Dalgetty:** Each local authority takes its own, quite different approach. Before I went to work at Fèis Rois, I lived in Edinburgh and worked for the City of Edinburgh Council, whose approach was different. It delivered the whole YMI target

within the council, using its own staff, and did not work in partnership as much as Highland Council does. The approach is different from authority to authority.

**Colin Beattie:** There is £8 million going into this initiative, with some Scottish Government formula determining the distribution of the funds. I presume that councils must make a bid to get their share of the money based on that formula, and I assume that they have some sort of common approach to achieve that outcome. There must be something that is common in their approach.

**Fiona Dalgetty:** You would need to speak to Creative Scotland about that. I know that authorities submit proposals and must show evidence that they have met their target for the previous year—that every child has had their year of free music before P6. Creative Scotland asks authorities to meet targets each year before it approves the next year of funding.

The approaches differ because different authorities choose different styles of music. Highland Council emphasises traditional music. When I worked in Edinburgh, a lot of vocal work took place. If there is a rich history of brass bands in the community, an authority might have more brass tuition. I understand that approaches vary among authorities.

**Colin Beattie:** I ask my next questions out of curiosity. By the time that they reach primary 6, every child should have had one year of free tuition. Is that aimed at a critical point? Is that better in P4 or P5? I understand what you said about the area with which you are familiar, but do you know whether there are accepted practices for that?

**Fiona Dalgetty:** Primary 5 is the usual time for the provision, but some people are doing work in the early years and are starting earlier. Highland Council invests from primary 3 onwards, but the general age group is primary 5.

**The Deputy Convener:** I think that primary 1s would struggle with a tuba.

**Clare Adamson:** Ms McAlpine talked about free provision. Although tuition might be free, one barrier to taking up an instrument is accessing an instrument. In Edinburgh and Glasgow, where tuition is free, do you have any idea whether families who cannot afford to purchase instruments have good access to them?

**Mark Traynor:** The national picture varies, especially among authorities that offer free tuition. My authority—West Lothian Council—does not charge for tuition. Generally, access to instruments is available at primary school. When children move to high school, parents are obliged to rent or buy an instrument.



I know from travelling around primary schools that, given the number of children who want to be involved in music, we could probably employ double or three times the number of instrumental teachers that we have. However, we must work within the resources that are in place.

**The Deputy Convener:** That brings us neatly to the next question.

**Neil Bibby (West Scotland) (Lab):** The first answer concerned budget constraints on local authorities, which are having an impact on a number of areas, of which music tuition is one. The overall number of teachers in Scotland has reduced significantly in the past few years. Has the number of music teachers and instrument tutors reduced? Are there enough teachers and tutors for the provision that we want?

**Mark Traynor:** We would love to have more tutors but, unfortunately, what you say is correct. As budgets have become tighter in the past few years, fixed-term or temporary contracts for staff have not been renewed, to allow councils to balance their budgets.

A reduction has taken place. Services are becoming more and more stretched in fulfilling their obligation to allow access to instrumental music tuition throughout authorities.

**Clare Adamson:** During the festival of politics at the Parliament, I attended an event at which I saw a presentation from the Sistema Scotland project. I understand that running that project costs about £1,700 per participant. What plans does Sistema Scotland have to roll out other projects across Scotland? Do the main barriers to delivering another project relate to finances or capacity?

**Francis Cummings:** The figure that I have is about £1,500, which is in the region of the figure that you mentioned. On the face of it, that might appear to be expensive, but we work with the whole community and not just with school-age children. We work with pre-school children, and an arm of our work in Stirling is with mothers, carers and babies. We are also engaging in adult education. From that perspective, we are looking to develop a lifelong model. What we are hoping to achieve is social change.

When we look at that figure, we should also consider other costs. One of my colleagues did an exercise to trace a problem family and worked out that, over seven years, that particular family cost £1.7 million—that was in other interventions.

The cost sounds expensive on the face of it, but we would like to look at it in the context of the whole community and the whole package.

We very much hope that we can roll out our project. We see Stirling very much as a pilot

project and we would like to roll it out in other areas. We are in negotiations with other local authorities at various levels. Our recent concert in Stirling generated a lot of interest, and understandably so. It is something that we are very proud of.

Money is always an issue, but I hope that we can look beyond just the financial implications of a project such as ours and see the social benefits and the benefits to the whole community.

**Clare Adamson:** It is an absolutely wonderful project. I do not think that anyone who saw or heard the concert could think otherwise. In fact, I have my video recorder set to tape the documentary about it on Thursday night, when I believe that it will be rebroadcast.

What I find interesting is the transformational change in the community. I understand that you are now in the fourth year of a five-year project, so many of the young people who came to you as primary school students are now going to high school. Are you tracking their achievements in high school and the outcomes for the children to see whether the project has led to a change in their academic careers as well?

**Francis Cummings:** Yes. It is difficult to produce data at this stage, because the project is in its relative infancy. Of course, we have the Scottish Government report, which was done after three years. We are working with schools and we are looking to develop a model for tracking children so that we have some evidence at the end of the process that there has been an element of transformation and that the project has impacted on their education, on social wellbeing and on their families. As I said, however, the project is only four years old, so it is early days.

**The Deputy Convener:** Is the project a direct lift from the project that is run in Venezuela, or are there are significant differences?

**Francis Cummings:** The answer is yes and no. Yes, from the perspective that we are seeking to immerse the children in music, which is very much what they do in Venezuela. The philosophy of the Venezuelan project is that being a member of the orchestra, being a member of a community and having an identity within that community are transformational. From that perspective, we lifted our philosophical basis from what happens in Venezuela. The Venezuelans have been very supportive. We have had a lot of input and a lot of mentoring from them, and a lot of encouragement as well.

I have been to Venezuela and seen the methods and modes of delivery there. Our teaching styles differ slightly as we operate in a different culture. Our children are used to learning and relating to adults and teachers in a different

way from the children in Venezuela, so we have to take account of that. We are also keen to work with other agencies.

We have adopted some methodology that the Venezuelans do not necessarily use, but our Venezuelan mentors have been supportive and have encouraged us—and me, specifically from a musical perspective—to come up with a model that is relevant to Scotland and not to try to produce a carbon copy of what they do in Venezuela, particularly in relation to methodology.

10:30

**The Deputy Convener:** Is the project funded directly from central Government finance and as part of a national programme?

**Francis Cummings:** Do you mean in Venezuela?

**The Deputy Convener:** Yes.

**Francis Cummings:** Yes, it is. Maestro Abreu has managed to negotiate that through various different regimes. There are 500,000 children in the project in Venezuela. It is enormous.

**Liam McArthur:** Nobody doubts the impact of Sistema Scotland. Whether or not we can nail it down precisely, it is clearly having an impact. The intensity of the learning and the breadth of the wider social impacts that you are able to achieve are impressive indeed.

Has the wider delivery of music tuition in Stirling been impacted by having Sistema Scotland on its doorstep? Has the project had a knock-on effect because it attracts so much interest and because of its funding streams?

**Francis Cummings:** We have sought, and worked hard, to be as supportive of the local authority instrumental service as we can. We share resources with the service and have sent a number of our children to its events, as part of our aim is to integrate the children from the Raploch into the wider educational community. We have also run a number of training events to which we have invited the local authority.

We want to be as supportive as we can be. We are not setting up in competition. Our aims are slightly different. We aim for musical excellence, but we are not out to be an alternative to the local authority, so we are supportive of it and see its staff as colleagues and partners.

**Liz Smith:** I agree entirely with Clare Adamson that what you have achieved is fantastic, but we obviously want to try to allow that to happen in as many places as we possibly can. Mr Traynor mentioned opportunities for every pupil. If charges are introduced in some limited form—in his comments at the weekend, he said that he did not

envisage there being any quick change in that regard—would there be any scope for cultural trusts or local businesses to be involved in helping to deliver some musical opportunities?

**Mark Traynor:** The EIS position is that instrumental music, as part of education, is funded centrally by local authorities and Government and has an important role to play in young people's lives. The evidence for its educational benefits has been demonstrated throughout the world and here in the United Kingdom—by Professor Sue Hallam, for instance. That is for central Government and local authorities to fund; it should not be funded privately.

Sistema Scotland's position is that it enhances that provision. It is right that it should work in partnership with tuition in schools. What Sistema Scotland has achieved is to be applauded and welcomed, but we need to ensure that every pupil in Scotland has access to instrumental tuition and the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, regardless of cost and geographical location.

**Liz Smith:** So you are asking for a sea change in local authority priorities.

**Mark Traynor:** Yes.

**Jean Urquhart:** Mr Cummings, do you apply for youth music initiative funding for Sistema Scotland?

**Francis Cummings:** I do not think so. I am almost 100 per cent sure that we have not applied to that initiative for funding.

**Jean Urquhart:** According to your website, you do not receive any public money.

**Francis Cummings:** No. We have not had any public money until now. We have a professional fundraiser who takes care of that aspect, so I am not entirely sure. I do not want to be dishonest—to the best of my knowledge, we have not applied for youth music initiative funding.

**Jean Urquhart:** I was just interested.

On the same theme, can Mr Traynor tell me whether his members are involved in the music delivery that is being charged for? Does that tuition take place during school time?

**Mark Traynor:** Yes. Much has been bandied about in the press about extracurricular activities, but instrumental lessons are delivered during the school day by instrumental staff. Those staff can prepare and deliver up to 60 per cent of an SQA candidate's music exam.

**Marco Biagi:** Given the issue of charging, and given the projects that exist around the country, are there any young people who are seeking musical educational opportunities but are not

being provided with them? Is there unmet demand out there?

**Fiona Dalgetty:** The youth music initiative has been fantastic in meeting demand. The pathways to music project through Young Scot is a great way for young people in Scotland to access music.

Another initiative—which the youth music initiative funds—is the music plus scheme, which is run through the Scottish Music Centre in Glasgow. The YMI is very effective, and in my experience it has provided opportunities for young people who did not previously access music-making opportunities.

Our organisation has been doing a lot of work in Highland with a joint education and social work service in Inverness called the bridge. Those young people had very little—if any—arts provision at the bridge centre, but they have now written and recorded their own album of songs and held a CD launch.

We have been working in partnership with Live Music Now and Drake Music Scotland to address the needs of young people with additional support needs who were previously not accessing music making. We have two pupils at Drummond school in Inverness who are learning to play the fiddle.

Those routes have all been possible because of the YMI.

**Mark Traynor:** From EIS members' perspective, as soon as any form of charging is introduced, a group will be excluded. We are finding with exemptions for free meals, for example, that it is the middle tranche—those who are just on the borderline—who are having to decide as families whether they can afford to pay those amounts each year or whether they have to focus on something else and prioritise.

We have no formal position on the YMI as our members are not really involved in it. We applaud and welcome it, and it has been groundbreaking. However, instrumental teachers are concerned about the longer-term strategy. Young people have their one year of free tuition, but where do they go then?

The difficulty is that if they live in a charging authority area, parents have to make choices. They might say, "My son or my daughter loved that; it was a fantastic opportunity and a great experience, and something that they would like to continue, but we cannot afford it". Local authority instrumental services are at times finding it difficult to absorb the numbers that are involved in the YMI projects.

**Fiona Dalgetty:** With regard to the pathway that Mark Traynor spoke about, in my experience at Fèis Rois, working in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal and Highland Council, that model works

well. We offer 12-week blocks of tuition in schools, and young people who have become really interested and want to continue can then access tuition either through the music service or through the series of after-school classes that Fèis Rois runs.

There is a ladder of progression: a young person can come to one of our music centres after school, and they might then come to one of the week-long residential courses that we run. Eventually, they might become part of our training programme for 16 to 25-year olds on the ceilidh trail, and it comes full circle 25 years later when many of them come back and teach for us. I do not know whether that is replicated in many—or any—other local authorities, but that partnership works well in Highland.

**Mark Traynor:** From an EIS perspective, we are looking for fairness across the board, and at present that is clearly not the case among authorities. There is a huge range in charging, from zero up to £340. It has been said that there is a postcode lottery in that regard, and effectively there is. One authority can be charging while the authority next door is not, and access and opportunities are then reduced considerably.

**Joan McAlpine:** Is there any evidence that living in, say, a rural or remote area affects cultural participation with regard to physically accessing musical tuition?

**Mark Traynor:** The EIS cannot bring any evidence to the table on that matter. If, however, you wanted to surmise, I would imagine that geographical distances, especially in the Highland authority area, would cause huge problems. We know, for example, of pupils who travel from as far as Wick to Inverness and Fort William to be involved in the area groups that get together every year. All that means additional costs and expenses for local authorities. Although we do not have any evidence, I imagine that that has a direct impact on pupils' access to enjoying instrumental music.

**Fiona Dalgetty:** Although it works nationally, Fèis Rois has been looking at different strategies to deal with the vast geography of Ross-shire, which is where we are based and where much of our after-school provision takes place. Children from Scoraig, for example, will not be able to get to one of our after-school music centres so in the holidays we run one-week residential courses that those young people can access. In between times, young people and their teachers can access on our website the free-to-download online learning resources that we have been developing.

**Joan McAlpine:** I suppose that an important part of Sistema Scotland's philosophy is that the

orchestra should reflect and be part of an existing community where the children are not dispersed.

**Francis Cummings:** Yes. It is all about the children belonging to the group and having a group identity. I suppose that it is like belonging to a gang—without, I hope, the criminal element. That is certainly important for children.

I cannot really answer your question about rural areas but there are large urban areas where, although music in schools might exist on paper, children are not necessarily accessing it. Cost is, of course, very important and we certainly support free instrumental lessons. However, as far as access is concerned, there are wider issues to take into account. I want to be careful about numbers—I am not entirely sure of them—but I think that there was only one child in the Raploch who played a stringed instrument. For whatever reason, the children on the estate were not accessing local instrumental services. That might be a question for another day, but we certainly feel passionately about the issue.

**Clare Adamson:** Is there a cost to those who participate in the Fèis Rois residential courses?

**Fiona Dalgetty:** Yes. The courses are subsidised by various grants that we have managed to bring in from Highland Council and Creative Scotland, and our umbrella body receives funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise that it passes down to us. The real cost is about £350 per young person, but the charge for a residential place is £250. We also offer subsidised places and invite families to have conversations with us; we certainly try to treat people very much as individuals and look at things on a case-by-case basis.

**Jean Urquhart:** My question is for Mr Traynor. We have heard about the very diverse methods of delivery of tuition and the very different reasons behind them; Sistema Scotland, for example, has a quite different background and set of outcomes to the fèis movement. We acknowledge your findings with regard to the differences in—and, if you like, the unfairness of—provision, with some people being denied tuition while others get it. I appreciate that finance is key to this issue.

10:45

I wonder whether your members have a feel for what a service should look like. Fèis Rois started because no traditional music was being taught in schools less than 30 years ago. Not only that, but no grants were available from the Scottish Arts Council for traditional music: “traditional” was seen a bit as being a dirty word.

Without a Catholic priest in Barra having started with a few families, would there be a Celtic

Connections? I am not being flippant in asking that. More than 50 per cent of the first Celtic Connections concert came from a voluntary organisation that was delivering a service that was otherwise being denied people. In the great scheme of things, if we were doing some real blue sky thinking, would all such organisations have a place and a role in Scotland?

I do not know the figures. How many organisations are there in the fèis movement and how many children or young people are involved?

**Fiona Dalgetty:** Approximately 40,000 young people in Scotland take part in fèisean, but Fèis Rois is the only one that has paid staff. Another 42 community fèisean are run by parents, teachers and volunteers in the community who deliver the residential model and some follow-on classes throughout the year.

**Jean Urquhart:** Does that programme fit in or will it always be separate?

**Mark Traynor:** In an ideal world, there would be diversification. It is important that young people have the opportunity to embrace all cultures in music. YMI highlighted the point that very little Scottish traditional music was going on in the central belt, so the YMI money has opened that up for young people to experience. There is a place for everyone. Sistema Scotland has a definite role to play in the social context; other organisations can bring cultural and musical aspects to education.

We have a difficulty and we need to be careful because, as funding becomes ever tighter, groups that are all pulling in the same direction will be fighting for financial support to achieve the same goals. We who are sitting here today represent three different groups, but we have the same objectives. We need to be clear about that.

From the EIS perspective, instrumental music has historically been the responsibility of local government, which we want to continue. However, I see no reason why working in partnership or working together as one group within a local authority could not be achieved.

**Jean Urquhart:** I might not be thinking this through properly, but I would have thought that all of your groups have different objectives; I do not think that they are the same. The objective of the fèis movement—for people to know and understand Gaelic and traditional music—is not the same as the social context in which Sistema Scotland works. I presume that academics and professional teachers are looking to teach quite differently and to attain different goals. Your objectives might complement one another, but I do not know that they are all the same.

**Francis Cummings:** I just want to clarify that all the teachers at Sistema are qualified musicians. As well as social transformation, we have a rigorous curriculum, which is why I was appointed to oversee the curriculum and ensure that what we deliver musically is of the highest order. Yes—we are a social transformation project and that is our primary aim, but the delivering of musical excellence and the best possible pedagogic models that we have adopted are important in that transformation.

I am sorry: it felt as though Jean Urquhart was saying that we do not take the content of what we deliver as seriously as some others do, but I assure you that we do.

**Fiona Dalgetty:** One of the good strategic things that has come out of the youth music initiative is the funding that is available to establish music forums in every local authority area, with the aim of bringing everybody together. Fèis Rois was recently involved in establishing the Highland youth music forum, which has representatives from various groups. Norman Bolton, the instrumental music service manager in Highland, is on the forum, along with us and people who are involved in samba and jazz and so on. We are working together strategically. The young people who come to Fèis Rois see all music the same way. Some young people who come to our residential event in October are classical violinists who love traditional music and who also listen to Radio 1. We have to bear that in mind when we are looking at the bigger picture.

**Neil Bibby:** We have talked a lot about the budget pressures that local authorities are under. It is clear that council tax revenues do not provide the level of free music tuition that we want. Some councils charge for music tuition. Do you consider that to be a cultural tax?

**Mark Traynor:** I consider charging parents to be an additional tax. Although we talk about free instrumental tuition, we must be clear that it is not free, because the parents pay taxes, including council tax. Therefore, they are having to pay once again for something to which they feel they already contribute.

**Liam McArthur:** I echo Mr Cummings's comments on the urban-rural dynamic. I represent a constituency that does not have the geographic scale of Highland or even Ross-shire, but it is geographically challenging when people have to get on a ferry or plane to access lessons. Nevertheless, Orkney and Shetland are blessed with a fine musical tradition. Part of the controversy on charging is, clearly, that Orkney and Shetland have taken a different approach in that context.

I appreciate that this question is probably more for COSLA or individual councils, but is there anything to suggest that the revenues that are raised through charging are being ring fenced for, or redirected into, expanding the range of instruments and types of music that are available to children and young people? Perhaps the money is even being used to encourage those who have been resistant to taking up a musical instrument. I appreciate that I am asking you to come up with a justification for something to which you are implacably opposed, but I am fishing around here.

**Mark Traynor:** You are right that that is a question for COSLA. If we looked into that, we would probably see that the money is not being invested in instruments, but is being used to shore up and subsidise the staff who are involved in running the service. That is my summary of the situation.

**Liam McArthur:** From the list of councils that are charging, is there any correlation between the councils that charge at the upper end and resistance to cuts in staffing or local provision? Alternatively, are councils that are not charging, or that are charging at the lower end, having to introduce cuts in numbers of teachers or available instruments?

**Mark Traynor:** To my knowledge, authorities have not increased staffing levels, so I surmise that the money that is being raised is being used to support what is already in place. As I said, that is a specific question for COSLA.

**Fiona Dalgetty:** My understanding is that, because of the traditional music interest in Highland, the council has this year appointed two new instructors in piping and pipe-band drumming, and has invested in those instruments.

**Liam McArthur:** That is interesting.

**Marco Biagi:** Mr Cummings touched on issues in parts of the country with getting people involved, because of the nature of music provision. I acknowledge the benefits of the YMI at primary school level.

In physical education, there has been quite a substantial shift in how the subject is taught, in what is offered and in the language that is used to appeal to young people. Has that happened in music in the same way? If not, should that be considered in the context of the teaching of music in secondary school, so that it appeals broadly to what I think a member of the next panel has referred to as the "Britain's Got Talent" generation?

**Mark Traynor:** Again, I would say that the difficulty is to do with resources in local authorities. There has been a considerable shift in the importance of PE and the emphasis that is placed

on it, which would be extremely difficult to emulate in music, given the constraints of current staffing levels.

**Marco Biagi:** I am referring, in particular, to the kind of experiences that are offered rather than to the political focus. If someone had suggested fifteen years ago that dance would be incorporated in PE, they would have been laughed at—indeed, they were, as that was when it was suggested. Now, dance is considered to be an extremely effective way of bringing young people into physical activity. Is there a parallel there for music? Is that what Sistema does?

**Francis Cummings:** What Sistema offers is quite different from what is delivered in a typical secondary school classroom. The same is probably true of what most instrument teachers do. We seek to give young people a highly specific set of skills, which are to do with playing an instrument and all that that involves. Understandably, the secondary school curriculum is much broader than that.

I have been a secondary school teacher, and I think that there has been a broadening of the curriculum. Teachers work hard to make their subjects accessible and culturally relevant to the music that young people listen to. Some would say that things might have gone too far the other way; I do not know. Being culturally relevant, engaging children in technology and exploring the role of technology is something that we look to do at Sistema, because that is the language of the children whom we teach. I suppose that more could probably be done, but that idea is at the forefront of many musical educators' thinking.

**Jean Urquhart:** My question is directed at Mr Traynor. I remember, as a parent of children at school, getting a letter from Highland Council saying that music tuition would need to be paid for. I confess—if that is the right word—that I wrote back and asked why music, rather than maths, had been selected as a subject in which tuition had to be paid for.

The current situation is not new. Do you perceive it to be much worse than it was previously, or have your members been challenging the philosophy of charging for music for the past 20 years?

**Mark Traynor:** Charging has continued to increase. This year, 11 local authorities have announced increases that are well above the rate of inflation. Creativity is embedded at the heart of curriculum for excellence, so music has a vital role to play. If we remove it from young people's education, curriculum for excellence will not work. Access continues to be restricted. To use a phrase of an old tutor of mine, we are returning to a phase

of "Who pays plays", which is not the culture that we are trying to encourage in Scottish education.

**The Deputy Convener:** I hope that I speak for the rest of the committee when I say that there is tremendous support for music of all types and traditions around the table and across Scotland in general. I thank you and your members for their efforts in working with our young people in particular.

It is clear that provision across the country is inconsistent, patchy and unequal, and I know that members will want to take that up with the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs when she comes before us. Are there any other issues that you would like us to raise on that occasion? If you want to write to us with your suggestions, we would be happy to receive them.

**Francis Cummings:** Some joined-up thinking is necessary. The patchy nature of delivery and the content of that delivery could be greatly improved. I speak not as the director of music for Sistema but as a professional musician and teacher when I say that that could be examined and improved on. Such improvement would enrich lives—especially children's lives—and would result in much greater cost efficiency. Most musicians and teachers would welcome that.

**Mark Traynor:** The EIS would look for a national policy on instrumental tuition. We would welcome a review to gather more information; we need a lot more information before we can move forward. We would like to see a national policy and more joined-up thinking among all the parties that are involved in music. Although we might look at things from different angles, ultimately our goal is the same: to allow our young people to access music and, through music, Scottish culture.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you very much.

We will also write to COSLA to ask it to submit some written evidence on the issue.

I suspend the meeting for a few minutes while we have a change of witnesses.

11:01

*Meeting suspended.*

11:05

*On resuming—*

## Cultural Participation

**The Deputy Convener:** Item 2 is an evidence session on differences in cultural participation across Scotland. I welcome to the meeting Robert Livingston from—is it HI-Arts or H1-Arts?

**Robert Livingston (HI-Arts):** HI-Arts.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you. I also welcome Julie Tait, director of Culture Sparks, and Fiona Ferguson, development director of Imagineate. Liam McArthur will start the questioning.

**Liam McArthur:** Good morning. The latest Scottish household survey suggests that almost nine in 10 adults have participated in cultural activity or attended a cultural event over the past year. Although on one level the figure is impressive, it has not changed markedly in the past four or five years. Do you have any inspirational ideas on how we reach into the remaining 10 per cent and try to nudge the overall figure up further?

**Robert Livingston:** The difficulty with the household survey is that it does not get at issues of opportunity and motivation. For example, the figure for attendance at cinemas in remote and rural areas is quite high. However, there are two very obvious reasons for that: first, the Screen Machine mobile cinema; and secondly, the network of digital equipment that Scottish Screen and now Regional Screen Scotland have funded in those communities.

There is a strong correlation between the areas of deprivation noted in the research and the lack of access to quality product in those communities. Of course, all of that is linked to transport issues. People who live in Airdrie will have a fairly small chance of seeing quality fringe theatre and for non-car owners the cost of getting up to Glasgow or Edinburgh to see it will be quite substantial. You need to look behind the figures at the physical circumstances and the opportunities that are available for people to participate.

**Julie Tait (Culture Sparks):** This is, of course, the million dollar question. There is still room to grow across the full range of customer segments and lifestyles.

One challenge is the high degree of churn in the sector. It is a bit like a leaky bucket; we are investing an awful lot in attracting people to come and see work for the first time but not in maintaining those numbers and getting people to come back. A lot of that is to do with access

issues and scheduling, but we also need to consider deeper issues such as the ways in which people first engage with the cultural world and where they are led after that. In other parts of the world, role models have become important in caretaking those who have been attracted into a venue or to certain work and signposting them in different directions.

There is also an issue with varying performance schedules and programming. The performing arts, for one, tend to perform in the same way with a set schedule and timeframe and we should look at the arts world as an opportunity to do different things. Instead of simply getting people to come and look at art, say, we could reposition the sector to emphasise other elements such as making connections and socialising. We also need to be able to plan and bring some kind of logistical approach to the arts. We can certainly do a number of practical things to shift the pattern.

As I have said, we need to look primarily at people's first introduction to the arts and to think about this in terms of building a relationship with people instead of simply trying to sell them a ticket or entry to a one-off workshop. Although the situation has been helped by digital technologies, organisations often find it difficult to take such an approach and, at this particular point, to sustain a relationship with people across time. If you were buying a BMW, you would not be encouraged to buy only one. I realise that that is a crude analogy, but the people in that BMW garage would see you as a member of their constituency whom they would want to nurture and to encourage to return.

**Fiona Ferguson (Imagineate):** Speaking as someone whose area of research is children's performing arts, I am quite sure that increasing children's access to high-quality arts would, in the long term, affect those adult participation figures.

We have been doing a lot of work on how Denmark funds children's theatre. Denmark has 150 companies funded at project or core level to create work that goes directly into schools, not big venues in the cities; at the moment, Scotland, which has the same population, has only two. Imagineate would love to see real investment in work that goes directly into schools, because that is the only way that children can have equality of access. The reasons why people are not attending schools, village halls and so on are all to do with rural and financial disadvantage.

**Liam McArthur:** I am interested in the comparison with Denmark. Does it hold for the figures for those in Denmark who access cultural events later in life?

**Fiona Ferguson:** I do not know—I know only about the children's sector. As far as access to

work in schools in Denmark is concerned, there is certainly an incredible array of choice.

**Liam McArthur:** Mr Livingston highlighted the point about opportunity and motivation and mentioned the Screen Machine mobile cinema. A number of years back, I had the pleasure of attending one of its shows in Sanday in Orkney; as the wind whistled round the cinema, I found myself watching "The Perfect Storm", which seemed somewhat appropriate. Orkney is one of those places where the opportunity to engage with culture is almost ever-present. Such an opportunity is not necessarily taken for granted, but I think that the notion that those in rural areas struggle to access culture and cultural events is given the lie by the Orkney experience.

For example, Mr Livingston talked about a person in Ayrshire wanting to access French theatre. It might well be difficult for people to access French theatre in parts of Ayrshire, but I do not think that the person who wants to do so necessarily struggles to engage with culture and cultural experiences. It might just be that the variety of such experiences is constrained. Are the one in 10 people we are trying to get to falling victim to the fact that we are trying to spread the breadth of cultural experience for those who are already engaging in such experiences instead of concentrating on extending into that stubborn 10 per cent, which, I presume, has followed a fairly consistent demographic trend over the past couple of years?

**Robert Livingston:** As Julie Tait pointed out, it is partly about finding new ways of presenting work. We need look only at the huge success of Òran Mór's play, a pie and a pint series, which is all about theatre as something that you can see in your lunchtime hour. In Inverness, a local voluntary group presents a series of concerts with music at 1 o'clock in the Town house; the audience is almost exclusively elderly, partly because they have the time to attend and partly because transport is readily available at that time of the day, they do not have to come out at night and they can see a straight 50-minute concert of fantastic quality. Being locked into the pattern of shows that start at 7.30 pm and run for two or two and a half hours disadvantages many people for many reasons.

**Julie Tait:** One of the challenges is that we talk about this in terms of whether someone is an attender or non-attender. Attenders are seen as being in a particular demographic; they are generally affluent, well educated and professional. However, the research that we are just about to complete and to which I allude in our submission shows a significant engagement over 2.5 million households. If you profile that national picture of engagement, you will find that it spans a huge

demographic. There are, of course, regional variations, but I think that the 10 per cent that you refer to is the same 10 per cent that you are challenged with in education, social enterprise and the commercial world.

A core part of the population is almost completely disengaged for many and varied reasons. Part of that is to do with poverty of aspiration, whereas some of it is just poverty. That particular segment is probably a bigger challenge for the arts sector than for the education sector, although it faces the same challenges. We need to understand more about the issue. We need to consider the cultural and social infrastructure in communities that can allow people to connect up.

11:15

That is why the projects on cultural mapping are interesting. The aim is to produce a kind of three-dimensional map that shows what the population looks like. It does not show whether people are rich or poor; it describes a segment, what the social fabric is underneath that and how the communities engage with the police and social work. It then shows the cultural infrastructure, both informal and formal—so not the arts provision.

One of our challenges is that, when we pull people in, their engagement usually comes first from their practice or participation, so people have to have some connection, if the connection is not driven through education or family. We almost need to take a helicopter approach. We are beginning to do some of that work. We then need to focus all our attention on that core.

On its own, a single arts organisation cannot address the 10 per cent of people who do not take part in cultural activities. We first have to understand who the people are. We now have the specific information that can allow us to begin to drill down into that. The challenge for the committee is about how to address the issue in a multi-agency way. That has certainly been our experience in the east end of Glasgow in considering legacy projects on cultural infrastructure and sport, post the Commonwealth games.

**Liam McArthur:** You seem to be reinforcing the point about the importance of education, whether in raising aspiration levels or exposing children and young people to experiences that they then seek to explore further.

**Julie Tait:** Yes. It is also about the family. Research in Philadelphia, which is of a similar scale to here, is finding that the route to attendance is through practice and engagement, and through the family. A role model might be a parent or a member of the extended family, or it might be someone like Fiona Ferguson, who helps



to break down assumptions about what art is and the experience that people might have.

**Liam McArthur:** I am sure that Mr Cummings would want me to spare his blushes, but El Sistema appears to be a way in which that has been achieved. Are there other examples that have worked or are working in a Scottish context—or even a Danish or international context—that will help us to drill down further into that 10 per cent?

**Fiona Ferguson:** One example is the organisation Starcatchers, which specialises in arts for the early years. It has shifted from putting artists in residence in a lovely venue and then trying to bring in schools and families, to basing artists directly in family centres in areas where the level of participation is not high. It would be interesting to consider that approach more, because it is about the whole family.

Our big aim in taking more work into schools is to bring the experience to where people are. I have come from programming a venue where I spent hours scratching my head about how to get more people in but, actually, across Scotland, we have purpose-built venues for getting work to families: the schools and village halls. There has been far too much focus on creating a small amount of work that tours around a small network of venues in Scotland and leaves out a lot of places. Orkney has done extremely well. I have lived in the Western Isles, so I know that there is a huge difference in the attitude of some communities towards culture.

**Robert Livingston:** I will give two examples to answer the question. In one of my other roles, I am on the advisory panel for Live Music Now Scotland, which does a fantastic job in taking young musicians from right across the sector—from rock through traditional to jazz and classical—into care homes, workplaces, prisons and special schools. Those are exactly the places where people are having difficulty in accessing cultural activities and where there is perhaps a poverty of aspiration.

The other example is the fèis movement, which has grown up organically in the past 30 years and which now has many thousands of children participating. The challenge for the fèis movement, the basis and the structure of which are largely voluntary, is that it needs more help to get into the communities and environments where there is not that initial push from family and role models. The fèis movement has done some of that through its work in schools, and it has been funded to take traditional music into schools, but that is often a one-off example and there is not the follow-through, because there is not sufficient resource for that.

**Liam McArthur:** The problem does not seem to be a lack of examples. Is the issue a failure to sustain the approach over a period?

**Robert Livingston:** Absolutely—yes.

**Fiona Ferguson:** Yes.

**Julie Tait:** Building relationships in the most marginalised communities is hard and takes a long time. Even in bringing together agencies, there are issues about learning one another's language to sustain the approach. We are great at creating new projects and initiatives—El Sistema, for example, is great. However, the real challenge is connecting people to the existing infrastructure and encouraging them to take the opportunities that are on their doorstep but that they would never dream of taking unless some person or organisation facilitates that. That is the challenge, rather than organising new things. What is the right answer to the question? The key point is to consider what issue we are trying to solve. There are plenty of examples of new initiatives. Pretty much every arts company works in communities and with the education world and parents and children, but the question is why that fizzles out.

**The Deputy Convener:** As we have discovered in the past few weeks and months, some people are currently having difficulty feeding their family, never mind going to the theatre, the ballet or even the cinema. What impact is the recession having on cultural participation?

**Julie Tait:** The only figures that I can give are on ticketing revenue. We have software that has pulled out transactional data from ticketing sales at some of the major box offices in Scotland for the past five years. We are seeing a similar pattern, which is that there is a flat line, but with a small increase in yield. That means that people are running to stand still. In essence, organisations are sustaining themselves by increasing price. They are doing all that they can to generate revenue, but that is not sustainable. If things do not improve in the marketplace, there will be nowhere for the figures to go but downwards.

**The Deputy Convener:** Surely that has an even greater impact on the 10 per cent of people who are already marginalised—they will be marginalised even further.

**Julie Tait:** Yes.

**Robert Livingston:** Many organisations have moved away from concession ticket prices or have concessions that are so small that they make no difference, such as a couple of pounds. Quite a few festivals simply do not have concession prices any more. Even that slight inducement that might be there is disappearing under the pressure to balance the books.

**Julie Tait:** Yes, and we see a corresponding increase in yield.

**Fiona Ferguson:** I think that people are still coming in the same numbers, but it is relevant to consider who is coming. People cannot afford various things, and there is a spectrum. In my previous post, I found that many people came to the theatre rather than do more expensive things such as go into town. However, that 10 per cent of people are being pushed even further out of the way.

**Marco Biagi:** To return to the beginning, Liam McArthur's initial question was about the fact that 90 per cent of people participate in cultural activities and that, therefore, by implication, 10 per cent do not. Based on what you have said, if we are to encourage the expansion of cultural participation, rather than think simply about the 90 per cent of people who engage in some way, we should break that down and consider the proportion who go to see plays or live music. The 90 per cent figure suggests a healthy and thriving culture in which everybody is participating, but when we look at the different parts, the picture is much more complex. Should we look at the figure sector by sector rather than as a whole? According to figures from the Scottish Parliament information centre, 31 per cent of adults in Scotland attended a live music event in the past 12 months, 6 per cent attended a classical music performance and so on. That breakdown seems to give a better picture of the nuances.

**Julie Tait:** A sector-by-sector approach is an interesting one because it tends to reduce the question to "What is it about classical music or contemporary visual art that is the problem?", as opposed to "What is it about the 10 per cent of people who never participate in cultural activities that would influence their engagement?" and "Do we know enough about that 10 per cent?"

There are two issues. The glorious 90-odd per cent is the 90-odd per cent that organisations sustain themselves with. Encouraging people to have a range of experiences is extremely important. People participate in different ways throughout their lives. The participation of people with young families tends to go down, but their engagement as a family and what they want their children to do becomes more important. The 10 per cent of people who do not participate is fed from the 90 per cent who do. A sectoral approach to the 10 per cent is probably weaker, because significant attention will need to be paid to all the sectors collectively to achieve a shift in the 10 per cent, as it is a perennial problem, which will not be solved in 10 weeks through a marketing promotion.

**Robert Livingston:** There is another aspect to your question, which Julie Tait touched on. Many

people who would be classified as non-attenders by arts organisations because they have not been to an arts event for the past 12 months would think of themselves as attenders; it is just that they have not realised that it is more than 12 months since they last went. That is the time-poor sector of the community. Those people are very difficult to reach, because they think that they are supporting a particular organisation; they are in favour of it and would call themselves theatre-lovers, but they do not figure in the calculations. When they are asked the stark question, "How much have you done in the past 12 months?", they are not in the 30 per cent who have attended a music event or the 6 per cent who have been to a classical music performance.

**Julie Tait:** Another issue is what we want that 10 per cent to get from a cultural experience. We always tend to think that the arts means ballet, opera and so on, but the range of cultural experiences and what people get from them is such that it is necessary to know more about the 10 per cent in order to be able to present something that is relevant to them or which has a resonance for them.

**Neil Bibby:** We have focused on the 10 per cent of people who do not engage in cultural activities at all. I want to ask about those groups that participate but which have low participation levels. As a member for West Scotland, I am particularly interested in participation in small urban towns and deprived areas. What are the key factors in increasing participation among those groups?

**Julie Tait:** Do you mean apart from availability of a programme and a place to go?

**Robert Livingston:** It needs to be a quality experience. We are long past the day when a pioneering company such as the 7:84 Theatre Company could go into the most ramshackle venue and turn it into a ceilidh for the evening. Quite rightly, people expect that if they are to leave their house for the evening, they should have a comfortable experience. In the Highlands and Islands, we have seen huge benefits in that regard. We have seen community schools being built, village halls refurbished and the opening of new venues such as the expanded Eden Court theatre and the An Lanntair arts centre. For many of the smaller towns, that is part of the issue. If they have venues, they have not been upgraded or they have been closed, or they lack a proper facility, with the result that, unlike with Screen Machine, it is not possible to experience an art form in the way in which it should be engaged with.

11:30

**Julie Tait:** There is also the basic issue of accessibility of information. If I had £1 for every time someone said that they would have gone to an event if they had known that it was on, I would probably not need to be here. How easy it is for people to get information and how visible that information is are factors. The digital world will help us to accelerate that, because people's conversations are now online and visible. Without even speaking to anyone, we and people who are digital-savvy can learn an awful lot about engagement simply by grabbing a bit of code and using Google. There is an issue to do with how people receive information, and the internet is a key vehicle in that respect. For all the challenges that VisitScotland has faced in creating a portal to bring together information on travel, transport, geography and provision, it is at least trying to create a kind of home for all that. I do not want to labour the point, but I think that that is certainly a barrier.

**Fiona Ferguson:** As I have said, we need to use resources such as schools and village halls better—and, indeed, have more tours. A show that we have put together with Mull Theatre has gone into 26 schools from the Borders to Portree and Aberdeenshire and is now about to go on another big tour of 32 village halls across Scotland, including those in Rum and Muck. That has been able to happen because the company has created a piece of work that it can roll up to a school hall with, no matter the size or technical capacity of the hall, and perform for the whole community. The company performs in the school in the evening; in fact, the show is called the wee night out tour, because it is all about the community coming along to the school in the evening.

When we were setting up the tour, the place where we found it most difficult to find a school was Edinburgh. Because of cultural olympiad funding, the performances go into schools for free and the school can sell tickets to its community to raise funds or simply offer it as a free performance. A huge number of Edinburgh schools turned us down because the teachers were not interested in working in the evening. As soon as we went north of Perth or south of Edinburgh, the schools were biting our hands off for the opportunity to put the show on. That shows that rural communities have advantages as well as disadvantages. Harking back to the Danish example, I think that if we had more work touring around schools, providing class-time experiences and using the school as a venue in its own right, there would be much better access.

**The Deputy Convener:** The main reason why you could not get access to schools in one local

authority area was that no one would staff the event in the evening.

**Fiona Ferguson:** That is right.

**The Deputy Convener:** And that happened only in Edinburgh.

**Fiona Ferguson:** We wanted to bring the show to Edinburgh because that is where our children's festival takes place in May, but that was the local authority that we had problems with.

**Neil Bibby:** Mr Livingston mentioned 7:84 and the problems with engaging people in new approaches. How were companies such as 7:84 able to engage people in deprived areas? Secondly, what problems do such companies face now?

**Robert Livingston:** When 7:84 started putting on "The Cheviot, the Stag, and the Black Black Oil" and such shows, it introduced a new paradigm and completely broke the mould of what theatre should be. It broke through the fourth wall and came off the stage. The play was like a variety show; it was engaging and, at the end of it, the audience was caught up in a ceilidh. The play, a pie and a pint series that I mentioned earlier is one of the current paradigm-changing approaches. We need more of those.

However, as Julie Tait has said, these should not be one-off projects. The great thing about Òran Mór is that it has been able to prove its value over 300 shows. That level of continuity is needed. Indeed, with 7:84, it was its next show and the show after that that built its audience and meant that it was not merely a flash in the pan. It helped to create the idea that touring theatre in remote and rural areas was something that mattered and which could engage communities. We need new paradigms and ways of supporting them.

**Julie Tait:** The point, though, is consistency. A practical element of engagement is the fact that people need time to plan and the ability to say, "I know that if I miss it this time, it will come round next year." Such an approach gives word of mouth time to grow. If you have a busy life or a busy family, that is not a "wouldn't it be nice", it is a "have to", whether you are a highly engaged family or not. There should be consistency, rather than a boom-and-bust project relationship.

The thing about 7:84 was the notion that the performance was more than just a piece of theatre, it was an experience. I am not suggesting for a minute that every one should have a ceilidh after their show, but a performance can be much more round than just something that you go to at 7 o'clock and watch before going home again. The idea of being able to explain and unpack the performance is important.

**Fiona Ferguson:** It is important to note that 7:84 was consistently touring over 20 years, and the audience that it built up over that time was significant.

**Robert Livingston:** Because the companies that we try to support in the Highlands are—with the exception of Mull Theatre—entirely project based, they might get a tour out only once every 18 months or so, which means that they cannot build familiarity. That tour might play for only two or three weeks, after which the investment in the show is gone, and there is no funding to restage the performance, even if it has been a success. Continuity is a crucial factor.

**Fiona Ferguson:** Yes. Shows become commercially viable when they are restaged, and they can then tour around communities in the longer term.

**Clare Adamson:** I want to drill down a bit further into the idea of engagement and the multi-agency work. The Scottish Book Trust is working with vulnerable families. As well as providing free books to all children in Scotland, it is providing books specifically to vulnerable children. The hope is that those children will be encouraged to go along to library events with sing-songs and nursery rhymes and other cultural activities.

Are you engaging with people who are delivering the getting it right for every child programme? Have you been engaged in any consultations or other means of feeding in to that process?

**Fiona Ferguson:** In my previous job, I worked with East Renfrewshire Council, and we programmed a lot with bookbug. That was a fantastic way of working, as we had quite a strong early years programme of theatre and dance anyway.

Currently, I work for an arts organisation and we have not had much communication or involvement with GIRFEC. That would be a good way forward. It would be good to consider the issue of entitlement for children. As you know, there are good examples of work happening, but until something is statutory, local authority provision will be a postcode lottery. That is my experience of working for local authorities across Scotland.

**Julie Tait:** It is interesting to focus on the audience as opposed to the art form or the sector. If you take that approach, you can ask, “If someone has been brought in to the experience of reading, where else would it be natural for them to go and how can that connection be made stronger?” That is a different question from “What do we provide?” We can think of the issue in terms of a map and ask how to lead people through their cultural life so that someone else does not have to do it all for them.

**Robert Livingston:** One of the difficulties that I alluded to in my paper is the reduction in staff resources in individual local authorities—for example, the loss of cultural co-ordinators, who would be the natural interface with a project like GIRFEC. That puts an extra burden on companies such as those that Fiona Ferguson works with to try to plug that gap.

**Clare Adamson:** I became a lifelong opera fan because of the opera in the round that I experienced as a primary school child in Shotts. From observation, I am aware that the thing that most enthuses young people and brings in families is the ability to participate, rather than simply to be consumers of the arts. Are there particular projects, present or past, that work to bring in audiences?

**Julie Tait:** The example that you gave is a terrific one—Scottish Opera is doing good work. I am not as familiar with everything that is going on, but the point is that we need to go to where the communities are. That work is hugely beneficial. We got you that way, for a start. Companies are doing a lot of that work, but we need to think of what the next step is, once that interest has been stimulated.

**Fiona Ferguson:** There must be a combination of participation and being excited by something you see. People who work in the arts always tell you that something that they saw in their childhood made them pursue an arts career. If we want equality of access, we need people to have that experience, whether it is participatory or sitting in an audience watching professionals doing something exciting. That needs to be across the board and not down to the choices made by individual head teachers or local authorities, which is a huge issue. That said, when I go to other places in Europe, people are excited by the curriculum for excellence. However, although culture is part of the curriculum, we need more resources to get into all the schools to ensure that everybody has access to the professionals, whether they are coming in for participatory experiences or a performance.

**Julie Tait:** That applies to both schools and family. Certainly in North America the route in is through schools and families that practise arts—so the route in is through practice and by participating or engaging with something. However, that is not necessarily seen as a linear thing—you do not practise arts just to attend events. Practice has many benefits in and of itself and it might be that people end up doing some other form of cultural activity.

**Fiona Ferguson:** The issue is related to the discussion that you have just had about music provision. If one local authority charges £200 each year for music tuition but in another local authority

it is free, where is that sense of entitlement to music? Who is being missed? Who might have come into music and become either the audience in 20 years' time or the next Nicola Benedetti? The 10 per cent who have never participated in culture are mostly in our schools, so how will you ensure that children have equality of access? How will you reach them all if we have a postcode approach to provision?

**Joan McAlpine:** It is important to return to the point about 7:84 and to talk about content rather than structures, which we have talked about a lot. It seems to me that the reason why 7:84 was so popular, along with Wildcat and the other touring companies of that era, was that it provided content for people in a language that they spoke—Scots—and that directly related to their experience. I am probably showing my age, but I went to the first tour of "The Steamie" when it came to Greenock. The play was sold out, and in every community around Scotland where "The Steamie" played the halls were packed out. I think that that was because it directly related to the cultural experience of the audience.

We have talked about the success of traditional arts in the Highlands and the fèis movement. I wonder about urban Scotland and the cultural traditions and backgrounds of the people who live in those communities. Have we done enough to address that and is there an overarching commitment to get content to those people that validates their experience and the language that they speak?

**Fiona Ferguson:** I can talk only about theatre, but there is a lot of work in Scots and "The Steamie" has just done another big tour. Work that is good keeps touring and keeps going. I used to be on 7:84's board. It was a good company—it created work that was not only in Scots, but was about issues that people are interested in. It had a successful work model.

**Joan McAlpine:** I am a fan of opera and ballet and it is great that we get those art forms into all communities, but there is a specific issue about building confidence so that people hear their language spoken and performed and can participate. We have a Gaelic strategy; do we need a similar strategy for the arts? Would that build people's confidence and encourage them to participate more?

11:45

**Robert Livingston:** The Gaelic example is interesting. There was a strong feeling that Gaelic needed theatre provision. Historically, over two major efforts, that has not proven to be successful. It was put in place as a strategic intervention, rather than coming out of the artistic and social

drive of people, as happened with Wildcat and 7:84. We need to be sure that we are not missing the people who want to do this kind of work, but the danger is in creating something top-down, rather than supporting the grass-roots ambition of particular creative people.

**Julie Tait:** That is a really important point. I cannot talk as much about artistic product, but I can talk about the notion of difference among populations. To have a sense of "it's about Scots language, and therefore this is the policy on theatre" perhaps does not reflect the majority of people's lives. I am arguing for a greater understanding of the views, needs, opinions and circumstances of individuals, because it is from there that great work comes. For example, visual artists will often immerse themselves in communities. From that comes work that people might not recognise but that has a resonance, not because it is Scots per se, but because it reflects the needs, culture, history, background and language of the people who live in those communities. Those differences are expressed very clearly in various parts of Scotland, so it would be difficult to have one policy. You can see where that might go—the danger is that everything would be like "The Steamie", be based in the 1940s or be in Doric. That would not reflect the needs, opinions and backgrounds of the majority of people.

**Liz Smith:** I would like to develop some of the very interesting themes that you have spoken about. You have all spoken very strongly about new initiatives, but in terms of getting people to come back to things, do you have specific examples from across Scotland of where there has been a high degree of success of the consistency that Julie Tait mentioned, with people returning to the same type of production? What are the examples of the biggest success and what are the specific features of the projects that have worked?

**Julie Tait:** I do not think that it is specific shows, because usually they do not come round often. Particular art forms that we have looked at have their fans. There have been some simple initiatives around retention, with commercial companies offering promotions and incentives. Subscriptions, memberships and loyalty schemes are practical things—the simplest things often work. Some of the larger companies are able to do that because they have the resources to focus their effort. They also have the information to help them. If someone does not know the pattern of attendance and they cannot gather or access that information, they cannot do anything with it. There are some examples of success. I hate to use the terms, but loyalty schemes and subscription packages are two that can be seen across Scotland.

**Robert Livingston:** The festival experience points to that. Festivals are one area where we see loyalty being built up very quickly. New festivals in the past two or three years have built up loyal followings that become the core of what they want to do. The lesson of that is that festivals are predictable. People know that, although the next event will have different content, it will be roughly like what went before, with something surprising and unusual.

Perhaps related to that is the experience of companies such as the Scottish Ensemble. They do not tour all year round—they do not have to play every night of the season, like the Royal Scottish National Orchestra—but they come to Eden Court and do four concerts in a year. The audience for those concerts has a much wider age range and demographic than that for conventional orchestras. The audience for concerts is sizable and predictable, but the Scottish Ensemble is edgy and exciting in what they present.

**Julie Tait:** The practical equipment and infrastructure that allows tracking is also really important. There can sometimes be a sense of “if we build it, they will come” and people just fire things out. However, Òran Mór, for example, is very specific. It is predictable, it charges the same price for each event and it is highly targeted—simple stuff like that.

**Liz Smith:** Is there specific evidence to suggest that the communities in which there is a high degree of success are those in which the local business community and the hotel network pitch in to a greater degree? Pitlochry Festival Theatre, for example, speaks very highly about the fact that the local business group and the hotels pitch in. Do we need to do more to help in that regard?

**Robert Livingston:** Those relationships are crucial. My understanding is that the attitude in Pitlochry changed when the theatre was closed and the business community realised that there was a gap. There is considerable scope for showing other communities those examples of how to make better relationships.

**Jean Urquhart:** To go back to the point about 7:84, the discussion that we are having now is endless. It has been going on for generations—hundreds of years, I suspect—and it will continue. It is about what makes something good and why people want to see it. My opinion might be that something is good, while your opinion might be that it is awful.

To add my tuppenceworth, what 7:84 did—with no Government funding, it must be said, as it was not invested in for a number of years—was tell a story about the people to whom they were taking it. My God, they fought for those bums on seats. I remember that, as I saw it in the Caledonian hotel

dining room in Ullapool. They went around every door—they did not just put a leaflet through but knocked on the door and said, “Would you like to come to this? I’ll sell you a ticket just now.” People said, “What is it about?” and they said, “You—it is about you.” Shakespeare probably articulates that better than anyone, and that is what theatre should do. It should be delivering that message.

There are examples from local authorities—and a shiver runs down my spine when I think of it—of the type of bureaucracy that delivers statutory provision. No one put a poster up, and no one ever asked anybody to buy a ticket. That has happened and, over the years, we have withdrawn a number of council-paid employees who might have been the whippers-in who excited an audience to come and see a show. There have been so many changes in that regard.

The real message from concepts such as a play, a pie and a pint is that we must confidently invest in the artist. The person who did not get the money was John McGrath, who wrote the first piece that 7:84 put on. We resisted that, and so it should be: the artist should always be fighting Government or delivering a different message—that is their role. That tension will always exist, but if the nation is open to allowing the artist to work, the right to fail must be in there as well as the right to succeed.

We are terribly keen to praise the right to success. However, the National Theatre of Scotland put on a number of productions that—in my opinion—outstripped “Black Watch” by a million light years, and yet it was “Black Watch” that caught the public imagination and is now in four productions around the world. There is nothing wrong with that—

**The Deputy Convener:** What you are saying has a lot of relevance, but I ask members and witnesses to keep questions and answers brief, please.

**Jean Urquhart:** It was just an observation.

**Robert Livingston:** There is another side to the 7:84 story. The other company that opened up the Highlands for theatre at the same time was the Medieval Players, who were a bunch of graduates from Cambridge. They did that in exactly the way that Jean Urquhart described. They arrived in the community and processed down the street with a cart and a guy in devil costume accosting all the wifies. They made it exciting. Relevance is what you make of it, and it is about how you reach out to engage people.

**Julie Tait:** Of course, relevance is all about knowing about the people with whom you are trying to engage. What slightly depresses me about the conversation about 7:84 is that the world is changing; the fact is that personal connections

can be made more easily in the digital world and people are looking for a connection to something that is relevant. We have the tools to do that without having to parade down the street or knock on people's doors. More than at any other time, we are in people's hands.

**Marco Biagi:** I will resist the urge to make an observation about that and will instead move on to an issue about performance-related culture that I think we have slightly avoided up to now: museums. According to the figures, 28 per cent have visited a museum in the past 12 months; I will get my knuckles rapped by my party's positivity brigade for being glass-half-empty about this, but that leaves 72 per cent of people who have not. In its submission, HI-Arts highlights the importance and changing role of small, independent museums and the difficulties that they are facing in keeping up with larger, better-resourced—and indeed free—counterparts. Given that this is clearly an important area on which Government policy directly impacts, where do you think we should be going with museums in Scotland? After all, given the very important contribution that they make, we do not want the value of small, independent museums to wither on the vine.

**Robert Livingston:** The creation of the new national development body out of Museums and Galleries Scotland is a big step in that very direction, because, as I understand it, it will look at heritage as a totality and will be able to involve itself in the work of Historic Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland and visitor centres that are not accredited museums. That ability to see the sector as a totality for the first time—in the same way, for example, that the Scottish Arts Council and now Creative Scotland have been able to see the arts world—will be a huge plus.

As I have suggested in the submission, independent museums need to be helped to move back into the more central role in their communities that they often had when they were created. A number of these museums opened in the Highlands in the 1980s and 1990s with very great fanfare, but they have never had the resources to recapitalise. Their displays are now very tired and out of date, they might well be using clapped-out technology, and there is real need for investment. Museums and Galleries Scotland—as it currently is—does its best, but it has only very modest resources for such work. I hope that the new resources flowing back into the Heritage Lottery Fund after the Olympics will help in that respect, because it will at least make available new capital resources that have not been so readily accessible for some years now.

**Liam McArthur:** Going back to our discussion about ensuring that these things remain relevant

and talk to people in their own language—and, as Jean Urquhart suggested, are as much about them as anything else—I wonder whether there is a danger of our being too wedded to particular bricks and mortar or exhibitions simply because they are there and of a tendency to recapitalise them instead of moving things on and providing seed funding for something else that might well capture the imagination more.

**Robert Livingston:** You are absolutely right. Part of the difficulty is that we frequently have groups who, in trying to save a particular building, think that turning it into a museum or arts facility is the solution. Too often, such an approach just creates a white elephant. The proposed cultural facility probably needed something that was not shackled by being shoved into a 19th century former school or hospital with access, accommodation and heating problems but needed, say, a purpose-built building such as Mull Theatre's lovely new production centre or the Moray art centre.

**The Deputy Convener:** Jean?

**Jean Urquhart:** Is it my question, convener?

**The Deputy Convener:** Yes.

**Jean Urquhart:** I am sorry—I was just listening to the conversation.

The national Gaelic language plan, which the committee has scrutinised, makes recommendations about the promotion and showcasing of Gaelic, particularly during the Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup and the year of homecoming. What is your view on that kind of specific promotion of and engagement with the Gaelic language?

12:00

**Robert Livingston:** Earlier, I talked about the difficulty in setting up a unique and dedicated Gaelic theatre. There is much more scope for being able to encourage and resource artists and arts organisations in all fields—visual arts, music, theatre and so on—to make more use of Gaelic in their activities. If we do that, it will—to use a horrible phrase—become normalised. The way to do it is to permeate the use of Gaelic through the artistic community.

**Joan McAlpine:** Is there any evidence that links an increase in how many times someone attends cultural events—or, indeed, the commencement of that attendance—to a culture of participation in creativity? Has any exercise tried to trace the links between the two?

**Julie Tait:** I am sure that some work has been done on that, but no specific report springs to mind. The assumption is that increased access

and participation leads to more frequent participation and a deeper range of experience, but whether that turns someone into the next Bill Gates, I am not quite sure.

**Robert Livingston:** To give a specific example, Eden Court runs drama and dance qualification courses for teenagers who are not able to receive those courses in schools in Highland. On the whole, those youngsters do not go on to study drama and dance at college and university level. However, their roundedness as people is enhanced by taking those courses—these are people who are travelling 50 or 60 miles every weekend to take part in those courses.

As in so many areas, there is anecdotal evidence, but not necessarily hard statistical evidence.

**The Deputy Convener:** Is there a growing recognition of the more informal activities that are going on in the community? For example, I would much prefer to go to my local miners welfare club and watch a comedian than go to the opera or ballet. That is just my preference—someone might want to go to see the football at Hampden, but someone else might prefer to watch an amateur team in their community. Is there a recognition of that, and how can we ensure that funding gets to some of those more informal cultural activities, which are hugely important to the localities in which they take place?

**Fiona Ferguson:** You probably need a Jean Urquhart in every village in Scotland, making sure that things happen. I am thinking of the folk club scene and other things that are run on a much more informal level.

**The Deputy Convener:** I sit on the board of a community development trust in my area—I have done since it started. We run various things, but a lot of the musical activity involves young people who are inspired by two or three older people. They run a host of charity events at which there is fantastic talent on show, but they get not a coin of funding for any of that. How can we ensure that they can access funding? The trust does something in that regard, but it is difficult in the current economic climate, and it will only get worse. Such activities go on in every community, but they are unrecognised and unsupported.

**Robert Livingston:** The real threat to that sort of activity is the disappearance of discretionary grants programmes. That is the route that it is natural for those community groups to go down. I do not want to single any area out but, in Aberdeenshire, the grant budget of £600,000 has disappeared in the space of two years. That is a huge resource, which was going out in grants of a few thousand pounds or a few hundred pounds

here and there. However, the important word was “discretionary”—the funding was not statutory.

**The Deputy Convener:** Is that an example of a situation in which, now, an organisation that wanted to access that money would have to have a constitution, a bank account and all the other bureaucracy that prevents organic, community-based arts from taking off?

**Robert Livingston:** Even with the local authority grants that I am talking about, all of that was often required. However, because of issues such as the ones that you raise, access to funds such as the LEADER fund is way beyond the reach of any small community group, whether formal or informal.

**Julie Tait:** There is another aspect to that, which is almost the reverse of it. How do we encourage the self-starting groups, which are getting on pretty much without us, to create a link back into the resources in a way that ensures that they can influence the resources that are already being spent within the sector? There is a tremendous sense that we can do something for certain groups, but there is still a huge number of individuals and households engaging in the sector. We need to bridge that link rather than find more money. However, I completely agree with Robert Livingston: small amounts of money go a significant way, but such grants do not exist any more.

**The Deputy Convener:** I thank our witnesses for their evidence and wish them a safe journey home.

*Meeting closed at 12:06.*



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