

Traditional MUSIC forum

9 October, 2020

Joan McAlpine
Convener
CTEEA Committee
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh

Dear Ms McAlpine

The Traditional Music Forum represents over 100 organisations and individuals involved in traditional music in Scotland. Non-formal music education is a large part of the work of the membership, providing tuition to over 17,000 young people and employing over 500 tutors, supported by over 1000 volunteers.

I am writing to you with concerns over the Youth Music Initiative budget for 2021-22, which falls under the remit of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture. As you will know the YMI budget has been subject to several cuts to the original allocation of £10m (that figure itself static for a number of years), with the result that it currently stands at £6.7m, a cut of one third over three years.

The YMI is particularly important for traditional music, as attested by the fact that half of Scotland's local authorities support traditional music projects through the YMI Formula Fund. This is an important source of income for freelance musicians, and, as important, a commitment to the creative vitality of a foundational part of Scotland's culture.

We were pleased to note that some of the emergency funding for youth arts is to be allocated to YMI (although not to the Formula Fund) However, this will go nowhere near what is required to bring the fund back up to something approaching its previous level. We are, however, concerned that, even with this modest increase, the level will not be sustained in next year's budget, and that the original ambition of the YMI to ensure that every school pupil in Scotland should receive a year of free music tuition before they leave primary school could be eroded.

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We would be grateful if the Committee could give some consideration to the matter of YMI funding during its budget scrutiny process.

Yours sincerely

David Francis
Director
Traditional Music Forum