

## **Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee**

### **Creative Scotland – Regular Funding 2018-21**

#### **Written submission from conFAB**

In 2016 we approached Creative Scotland (CS) with a plan to develop a new project *20 Seward Street*.

*20 Seward Street* is a new opera, performed in the Glaswegian vernacular, that explores the issues around migration, to be performed by professional opera singers and musicians, supported by a chorus of community singers from the migrant and wider communities in Glasgow: Irish, Jewish, Asian, Eastern European and refugees from across the globe.

Using the enforced migration of Glasgow's Tradeston community in the 1960's as a springboard, *20 Seward Street* explores the theme of migration. The composition is inspired by and at times reflects the musical traditions of the different migrant cultures. The supporting chorus would include members of the migrant, refugee and wider community, enabling us to reach a wide audience, increase participation in the creation of a new opera, whilst celebrating the breadth of talent in Glasgow. We want to involve people who might otherwise not have access to a cultural experience like this.

Following a very positive initial meeting with CS, we proceeded with an application to the Open Fund over 15K. We put in place a strong partnership for the project: Scottish Refugee Council, Maryhill Integration Network and Music Co-operative Scotland. The first application we put in towards the middle of 2016 was for both the development and production of the opera. Early in 2017 we were awarded £11,700.00 to cover development costs i.e. the writing of the opera and were told to submit a different application for the production. We waited a few months, had more telephone conversations with CS and submitted the 1st production costs application. This was rejected and not recommended for support. CS were again very supportive and managed to get us access to the full assessor's report. We then spent quite a considerable amount of time reworking the application, in particular the budget where the main concerns lay. We resubmitted and just before Christmas 2017 we received the second rejection with a very confused and incoherent explanation as to why it was refused basically saying it was a good application, that all the issues with the previous application had been addressed, that they thought the project would have a wide appeal, but they weren't going to give us the money. As it was the second attempt we can't now resubmit.

For us the main issue is that they have already invested 12k into the project leaving us now with a very well written, composed and fully orchestrated opera with very little chance of it ever seeing a stage. Some people would feel this has been a waste of tax payers money. Whilst we understand not all good applications or good projects can be funded to us this clearly demonstrates a lack of strategic planning and a lack of cohesion within the organisation.