

All Icing and No Cake –

Exploring the case for the development of the performing arts for children and young people in Scotland

Imagine – August 2012

In Article 31 of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child it states that:

- 1. Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.***
- 2. Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.***

This document seeks to provide a more detailed background to Imagine's submissions to the recent reviews undertaken by Creative Scotland, to make clear Imagine's position regarding the current state of the performing arts for children and young people in Scotland, and our desire to continue developing a thriving and sustainable sector.

Scotland produces some of the best children's theatre in the world today: prize winning work which is presented and lauded from Broadway, across Europe and all the way to Sydney Opera House.

Over the past two decades the number of acclaimed world class work produced by this country has been remarkable: **White, The Ballad of Pondlife McGurk, Shona Reppe's Cinderella, Labyrinth, The Emperor's New Kilt, The Red Balloon, Jason and the Argonauts, Dr Korzcak, Yellow Moon, Martha, Lifeboat, Hansel and Gretel, Scots-land, Titus, Mikey and Addie, Cloud Man, Paperbelle, A Thousand Paper Cranes and The Man Who Planted Trees** – the list could and does go on - are just some of the productions that have transformed the nature and standard of work produced in Scotland. In a fortunate position to both support and fly the flag for this work is Imagine, the organisation behind the biggest festival for young people's performing arts in the United Kingdom. Imagine is also an agency providing an ongoing role supporting the development, creation and celebration of work.

Our sector's success has been built on the dedication and commitment of artists who have found new ways of working: developing, creating and producing for longer periods, keeping work in repertoire and working in partnership. Opportunities to capitalise on this success through showcasing work to international audiences at the Imagine Festival and more recently, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe with Made in Scotland, has further propelled our success to all parts of the world.

"The work currently produced in Scotland is of the highest quality found internationally. It is my belief this is the result of Scottish artists being supported through the efforts of Imagine and its supporters, plus the Government's and the Arts Council's commitment to Theatre for Young Audiences. The benefits of such support are apparent in the enormous artistic growth Scottish companies have experienced over the past ten years. I have no doubt that through sustained financial support Scottish companies will continue to excel as leaders in the field of theatre for young audiences at home and abroad."

Artistic Director, Calgary International Children's Festival

But, behind this success, there is a simple truth. Very few children in Scotland will ever see any of this work as they grow up.

Our current investment levels mean that there is simply not enough properly resourced work to meet the needs of children, young people, teachers, parents and carers across the country.

Earlier this year, Imagineate undertook a benchmarking exercise to ascertain just how our core funding levels fared in relation to some of our neighbours. This document (Appendix 1) shows how far we lag behind comparable countries in the UK and Europe in terms of core investment by a central funding body:

Country	Annual total funding for Children and Young People's sector
Scotland	£743,000*
Wales	£1,364,250
Netherlands	£3,450,000
Denmark	£12,000,000

In England we looked at a number of regions. Examples are as follows:

North East	£419,421
Yorkshire	£612,500
London	£3,155,061

** The recent decision regarding Flexibly Funded (FXO) companies, which would include the two remaining flexibly funded companies Catherine Wheels and Visible Fictions, means that, beyond 2013, there will be no producing companies or artists in receipt of full time year-on-year funding from Creative Scotland. We are awaiting the outcomes of the various Creative Scotland reviews –in particular for theatre, dance and youth - to see the implications for children and young people's work and we look forward to working with Creative Scotland to create a dynamic and sustainable future that builds on the great achievements already made.*

The great percentage of children and young people in Scotland rely on non subsidised or commercial work in schools that can vary in quality, or a once yearly visit to the pantomime, which is often fabulous. To comply with Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to meet the opportunities and needs of our Curriculum for Excellence, which places creativity at the heart of learning, our audience must have access to a regular broad range of work that is considered, specific, resourced and created by the best artists we have.

The lack of funding in this area is historical and one that we believe can only be resolved with recognition from national and local government, along with agencies like Creative Scotland. It is an issue of culture, creativity, education and well being.

If greater resources were made available, then we believe we would be in a position to make a real difference. The present sector, though under resourced and relatively small, is skilled, flexible and dynamic. There are dedicated funded organisations in place like Imagineate, macrobert, Visible Fictions, Catherine Wheels, Puppet Animation Scotland, Starcatchers, that offer an experienced artistic, administrative, creative and productive base that could provide a springboard to serve the needs of artists and audience. Investment can be weighted towards the creation of new work and the continuation of our fine practice in this sector of keeping our best work in repertoire.

Only a few years ago our sector had reached the heady heights of having five dedicated companies - Catherine Wheels, Visible Fictions, Wee Stories, Giant Productions and TAG – who were all part of the Flexible Funding scheme. This funding allowed for the creation of work and also for the ability to plan and develop beyond the short term of project to project funding. An added bonus was the ability of companies to reach out and embrace other artists who required assistance in all aspects of producing. Shona Reppe, for instance, is a long term beneficiary of a relationship with Catherine Wheels. White, which was an idea by Andy Manley, was again a product of a relationship which allowed for ideas, and productions, to flow through a very small production team. This kind of endeavour is a brilliant example of a huge return on a small investment. There are many such examples of companies and artists collaborating with each other and the wider community.

We are tremendously proud of the work that has been created to date and tremendously proud of the artists who have committed themselves to creating for this audience. We know there are highly talented people waiting in the wings for the opportunity to join those regularly making work. Now is the opportunity to create enough quality work that will reach across our nation, and set up a framework that allows for the best ideas, and our best artists, to flourish. For our audience, who do not have a voice, it matters little that our best artists - in reality a very small group - fly the flag for Scotland across the world if they never get the chance to experience that work, or any quality work, not as a one off, but as a regular part of their growing up.

In the end, we believe, the choice is simple. If we as a nation embrace Article 31 and the potential of the Curriculum for Excellence, then we must provide the basic tools for quality engagement to happen. As a nation we would never contemplate sending inexperienced, unqualified people to teach our children to read, write and count. If we regard the performing arts as being an integral part of creating a healthier, fairer and smarter Scotland then the same conditions must apply.

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promoting and developing performing arts for children and young people in Scotland

(Appendix 1)

Benchmarking

This benchmarking exercise was carried out to look solely at central funding through a government or body like Creative Scotland to dedicated performing arts work for children and young people. England was chosen as our nearest neighbours. The other countries have been chosen as they are closer to Scotland in terms of population and are northern European, giving some idea what happens with some of our closest neighbours. The figures are for core levels of support, and do not include project funding, which would also occur in all the countries shown.

Scotland

Population → 5.2 million*

16% → 14 years and under (851,621)

19% → 19 years and under (1,175,272)

2010 estimates sourced from the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS)*

Funding 3

the number of companies funded year round and dedicated to producing and developing performing arts for children and young people in Scotland: Three (Imagine, Catherine Wheels and Visible Fictions) *

Current annual funding for these 3 companies:

Imagine*	£343,000
Catherine Wheels	£200,000
Visible Fictions	£200,000
Total per annum	£743,000

20 (on average)

The number of publicly funded productions created in Scotland each year for a children and young people's audience.

*In 2013 Catherine Wheels and Visible Fictions will both move from flexible to project funding.

Imagine is an artform development agency and producer of the Imagine Festival. Imagine does not make or produce theatre though it does commission work.

England

Population 51.4 million

22% 18 years or under (11.7million)*

*Dept of Health Figures

Funding

The figures below are based on the Arts Council Funding dedicated to companies creating performing arts for a young audience. The regional nature of English Funding makes for easier comparisons. Five regions: North East, North West, Yorkshire, South West and London have been chosen.

All funding below is based on offers to become National Portfolio Organisations and are all subject to an agreement being made. The offers are for the year 2012/13

North West

Action Transport	120,000
Contact Theatre	911,155 (building)
M6 Theatre Company	197,000
Ludus Dance	95,000

North East

Theatre Hullabaloo	208,000
Theatre Sans Frontieres	211,421

Yorkshire

Pilot Theatre	327,500
Theatre Co. Blah Blah Blah	108,000
Tutti Frutti Productions	177,500

South West

Sixth Sense	87,796
Theatre Alibi	240,204
Travelling Light Theatre Co.	200,941

London

Company of Angels	185,011
Fevered Sleep	200,000
Half Moon YP Theatre	216,198
Kazzum	127,927
Oily Cart	281,889
Polka Theatre	566,933 (building)
Theatre Centre	340,000
Theatre-Rites	239,004
Unicorn	998,099 (building)

Wales

Population → 3.1 million*

18% → under 15 years (541,152)

2010 Mid-Year Population Estimates sourced from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)*

Funding

From ACW Investment Review:

“Next year we will be supporting five other theatre companies – Arad Goch, Clwyd Theatr TYP, Cwmni'r Frân Wen, Theatr Iolo and Theatr na n'Óg - who previously specialised in producing Theatre-in-Education/Theatre for Young People. Producing and touring high quality theatre will continue to be a priority for these companies, as will be working with young people.”

2011 funding for these 5 theatre companies:

Arad Goch, Aberystwyth	£378,250
Clwyd Theatr Cymru TYP, Mold	£232,850
Cwmni'r Fran Wen, Anglesey	£182,075
Theatr Iolo, Cardiff	£246,225
Theatr na N'Og, Neath Port Talbot	£324,850
Total per annum	£1,364,250

Denmark

Population → 5.1 million*

24% → under 18 years (1,224,000)

2011 estimates sourced from Statistics Denmark*

Funding

Dedicated theatre companies for a young audience receive approximately 110.000.000 dkk (£12 million) from the Danish Arts Council.

130 theatre companies producing for young audience (mostly touring), composing of 30 small regional theatres and 100 independent groups (equivalent to Catherine Wheels, Visible Fictions, Wee Stories)

The small regional theatres receive app. 40.000.000 dkk (£4.3million)

Around 40 independent companies receive 30.000.000 dkk (£3.4 million) from the Danish Arts Council with grants ranging from 100.000 - 2.000.000 (£11,500 - £230,000). Funding decisions are decided by the committee of theatre managed by the Arts Council.

The remaining 40.000.000 dkk (£4.3 million) is used for production of Theatre for Young Audiences by the larger theatres (equivalent to NTS, Dundee Rep, Citizens etc).

In addition to the above, funding is also available from municipalities (local authorities); app. 10.000.000 dkk (£1.08 million)

Audience Incentives:

Denmark operates a Reimbursement System, which allows bookers to claim a 50% reimbursement from the Government when buying theatre tickets for a young audience - providing a greater incentive to book work which might be more expensive in terms of ticket pricing, but is properly resourced, better made, and of greater artistic, social and educational benefit than commercial theatre.

Netherlands

Population → 16.8 million*

17% → 14 years and under (2,864,681)

2011 estimates sourced from Index Mundi*

From 2013, after significant reductions in funding, the number of dedicated companies for children and young people's theatre will be reduced to 8.

The remaining companies will each receive a national government subsidy of €500,000 for a period of 4 years.

Total per annum (2013 >) €4,000,000 (£3,450,000)

Each region of the Netherlands has one dedicated youth theatre company.