

*interactions

creative strategies for business

Arts Council Consultation Process

Meeting on Orchestral, Choral and Ensemble Provision

10 March 2005

Orchestral, choral and ensemble provision

Thursday 10 March 2005, 2 - 5pm, The Arts Council

Séamus Crimmins welcomed the attendees on behalf of The Arts Council. Fergus Sheil contextualised the discussion and gave attendees some background information on the question for consideration at the meeting.

Questions for discussion

1. The meeting discussed the following questions:

Is there a need to re-invisage orchestral, choral and ensemble provision?

2. In discussing the question, the following emerged.

2.1 Overarching questions

An overarching question that permeated the discussion was – “does re-envisage potentially mean the loss of funding to existing organisations?” The premise of the discussion was that there currently isn't enough provision and additional supports are required to augment what currently exists.

2.2 What constitutes core provision?

Those in attendance outlined their view of the elements of core provision.

1. Key national organisations resourced through RTE and The Arts Council
2. Development of a freelance sector from which all other organisations draw
3. Performing groups in residence in regional settings
4. Professional development of artists
5. Funding and resourcing excellence

2.3 National and regional policy planning

Those in attendance agreed that an overall national policy for music is required that can also address the particular needs at local and regional level.

2.4 Performance indicators

Several of those in attendance suggested that audiences should not be the only measure of success and that habit and tradition play a part in why audiences come (and don't come). There can be a tyranny attached to the box office if this is the only indicator – sometimes excellent work is performed for smaller audiences and this also needs to be supported.

2.5 Role of The Arts Council

1. Developing national strategic partnerships (e.g. Department of Education and Science), RTE and other policy makers and funders of music (Garda and Army bands were noted as being key employers of musicians in Ireland).
2. Address (at a policy level) the gaps in provision (e.g. early/contemporary music).
3. Adopt the Music Network study on regional music schools as The Arts Council's education policy in this area and encourage the Department of Education and Science to do likewise.
4. Assist regional promoters to impact on marketing, programming and audience building – i.e. resourcing the gatekeepers at local level.
5. An opera house for Dublin – between 1000 and 2000 seats.
6. A small chamber music venue (approx 300 seats).
7. A second symphony orchestra based in Cork.
8. Invest in freelance orchestras for different types of music – e.g. period music, opera/ballet, operetta/musicals.
9. Develop a fund a “rehearsal bank” whereby the costs of two rehearsals of a work could be funded.
10. Develop a mentorship programme to assist third level colleges work with more artists.
11. Encourage multi-disciplinary venues to programme more classical music.
12. Impact on the quality of capital provision to ensure that it is adequate for classical music presentation.
13. Invest in a CD label for Irish music.
14. Audience development initiatives.
15. Commission more artists directly.
16. Re-instate Multi Annual Funding.
17. Invest in excellence – clarify what “excellence” means and ensure that a new generation of well trained and developed music artists are emerging.
18. Resource regional ensembles (for different types of music) in residence.
19. Resource that which is not being done by RTE.
20. There are many organisations “doing their own thing” in each of the art forms. Is there a role for The Arts Council in trying to work with all organisations in the contemporary field – a cross-art form approach?