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Director
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Our ref: 202000048843
22 June 2020

Dear Jude,

Thank you for your email of 17th June setting out your proposal for a support and stimulus package for theatre & dance in Scotland to sustain the sector during this period of crisis.

I share your view on the importance of the culture sector to Scotland socially and economically as well as culturally, and I am heartbreakingly aware of the challenges it faces and the profound effect that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on the important work that our cultural organisations, artists and practitioners do within our communities. The Scottish Government recognises that culture and creativity are essential to our wellbeing, and we are committed to doing everything we can to ensure our world-class culture sector can continue to thrive and to help it navigate these difficult times.

I recognise and applaud the significant contributions that Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) members and the wider cultural sector are making across Scotland to health, wellbeing and education.

Thank you also for your proposal for an investment of £30m to FST members. I am pleased that you have taken forward the ideas we discussed about new ways to engage with the public while your members are unable to present work as normal, and are looking to contribute to regeneration and recovery across Scotland, deliver support to communities and to children and young people in their reintroduction to formal education and leading innovation in the sector. This proposal will, of course, require further detail and consideration in the context of what is possible financially and other possible routes forward. In this first instance, I will share your proposal with officials in Creative Scotland and Enterprise Scotland and with my culture officials so that it is included in their considerations.

As you know, paralleling the sector's own quick and decisive response to the outbreak of the pandemic which undoubtedly saved lives, the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland responded very quickly to the emergency needs of the sector. We have been as flexible as possible with grant conditions for the sector so they can be repurposed for resilience, and have introduced significant packages of support as set out in my letter to the Parliamentary Culture Committee of 24 April, at: https://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/General%20Documents/20200424_CabSecEFWCToConvener.pdf, and more recently on 28 May,

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https://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/General%20Documents/20200528_CabSecEFWCToConvener.pdf, and 10 June,
https://www.parliament.scot/S5_European/General%20Documents/20200610_CabSecEFWCToConvener.pdf.

Our determination to continue and further our support of the culture sector remains strong. The Scottish Government will continue to work with the culture sector and the creative industries, along with our various partner agencies, including Creative Scotland, to achieve the best outcome possible in these most difficult of circumstances. The employment implications for the creative sector continue to be a critical factor in these discussions.

We are also working to consider how we can best support the culture sector and the creative industries to recover strongly for the future. In addition to the Theatre Working Group we have set up following my last discussion with you, other actions we are taking to support the sector include:

- We continue to push UK Government (UKG) for wider culture sector support.
- I will continue to press UKG to offer maximum flexibility through the Job Retention Scheme and Self-employed Income Support Scheme, and I will continue to work with you, trades unions and Creative Scotland to find ways to protect the people who work in the theatre sector.
- The new National Partnership for Culture (NPfC) has its first meeting on 24th June. The Partnership will provide strategic advice to ministers on the implementation of the Culture Strategy in light of the impact of COVID-19.
- The National Partnership has linkages with the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery that is reporting to the First Minister at the end of June. The Advisory Group is expected to include culture responses within its considerations.
- Discussion continues with the British Banking Association and the Association of British Insurers to ensure that businesses in the tourism, hospitality and cultural sectors have access to the loans and insurance that they need to underpin recovery.
- We are looking, as quickly as possible within a fast-moving, complex and crowded context, at what further measures of support the Scottish Government might be able to offer, and your proposal will be helpful in making that assessment.

Thank you again for your proposal. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that our commitment to our world-class culture sector remains strong, and we are doing all we can to support theatre and dance at this very challenging time.

*Kind regards
Fiona Hyslop*

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