



# SEASON REPORT

## 2024/25

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**It's certainly been a Season of celebration with some notable milestones, magical moments and positive changes.**

2024/25 saw us mark 30 years in the business of bringing joy to young people and their families through orchestral music. Performances have stayed true to our initial mission; providing innovative, high-quality, and child-centred experiences (for young people age 4-12), and this Season's offerings were bolder and brighter than ever before. We travelled haunted corridors of concert halls, blasted into space, explored the natural world back on Earth – all while highlighting the storytelling and universal power of music that connects us all.

Feedback speaks for itself, and we're fortunate to be able to listen closely for more via our Family Forum, which has attracted 22 new sign-ups - an honest, loyal and enthusiastic group. As well as getting to know our audience, our staff team has also enjoyed training opportunities in areas relating to accessibility, Decision Science and social value measurement, plus finding a new home (office) in the heart of Glasgow City Centre.

Headline news came in January when Creative Scotland announced their support for CCC by granting us Multi-Year Funding for the first time in our history. We're hugely grateful for the security to plan ahead for activity that really engages, and the fantastic endorsement for our future.





*"2024 saw CCC celebrate 30 years of musical performances across Scotland, a milestone which was further enhanced by receiving Multi-Year Funding from Creative Scotland for the first time. This is deserved recognition of the pivotal role which CCC now occupies in the musical life of Scotland. Together with the continuing support from various Trusts and other donors, CCC can plan future programmes with confidence and continue to offer its diverse range of musical experiences to young people."*

**Ian Mills**  
CCC's Chair



*"2024 ended with one of my favourite large-scale CCC gigs, A Christmas Carol! Whilst we have visited this before, it was tweaked with some new tunes, and it felt so original. For the chamber style gigs this spring, it was great to have packed audiences, with lots of folk interested to talk to us at the end. Always great to see the concerts bringing different generations of the family together and making people happy."*

**Owen Gunnell**  
Artistic Director & Presenter

*"My highlights have included leaving the audience buzzing (pun intended!) with our premiere performances of Aileen Sweeney's bee-inspired 'Waggle Dance' in Aberdeen and Dundee, turning Savourna Stevenson's fantastical 'Misterstourworm and the Kelpie's Gift' into a film (out soon!) and working with artist and CCC musician, Kirsty Matheson. Next up, Fright at the Museum in Glasgow and Edinburgh. See you there - if you're brave enough!"*

**Catherine Earnshaw**  
Creative Director



*"Our anniversary season has been a celebration, giving us cause to revisit some of our greatest achievements while also focussing on our future - providing enthusiasm for new, exciting projects yet to come. A highlight of the year has been filming Savourna Stevenson's Misterstourworm. Loved by our musicians and audience, it's a work we've often returned to over the last 20 years. It's the perfect combining of music and story - a Peter and the Wolf for this generation of children."*

**Pippa Barnwell**  
Chief Executive





# 2024 / 25 in NUMBERS

282 families surveyed

**60**  
workshops

**132**  
young  
performers

★★★★★  
4.6 stars out of 5 for enjoyment

**2** original commissions  
**4** new arrangements  
**1** premiere

**14** concert  
performances

**37** freelance  
musicians  
engaged

**15,705**  
total audience\*

**30.4%** were  
non-White  
Scottish/British\*\*

**98.6%**  
would like to return  
to a CCC concert!

**55%** had been  
to a CCC event  
before

\*Includes digital and live performances

\*\* African; Arab; Asian; Black; Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups; White European; White Irish and White Other

# AUDIENCE REACTIONS

"The kids were up **dancing**, just like they'd react to any other style of music, but **loved that they felt comfortable** doing that to classical music."

"**Best thing** we've ever done."

"**Fantastic job CCC**, everything about the concert **thoroughly exceeded our expectations.**"

"The boboe [oboe] was my **favourite!**"

"It **wasn't stuffy**, you could make noise and relax."

"Felt **very lucky** to be able to attend something so **high quality** with my young family."

"I never thought [my son] would love it as much as he did. It was **fantastic** and had him **completely captivated.**"

"CCC clearly planned this well for kids like mine who typically struggles with keeping focus. The after performance **time with the musicians was fantastic.** We were really pleased to see him **interested and learning** about the instruments."

"The musicians were **great** and **clearly enjoying their work!**"

"**Love the concerts** and always appreciate what you do."

"**Absolutely spellbinding.** we loved every minute!"

"**Brilliant.** Very warm and welcoming...every concert **gets better and better.**"



# MEET OUR MUSICIANS



We consider ourselves lucky to work with both longstanding and emerging talent in Scotland, and we're proud of the genuine rapport we have built with creative individuals. It's always beneficial hearing about CCC projects from our collaborators' perspective, and their most memorable moments:

*"Playing to my own family and seeing their enjoyment."*

*"[I watched] a primary student in a workshop have the day of his life whilst another student found a confidence and validation he didn't know he was allowed."*

*"I met the parent of a child at a sports event that had attended one of the concerts in Haddington. They explained that they had enjoyed it so much that they had the grandparents take him to St Andrews to watch it again the following day."*

*"All work with CCC is memorable and so much fun."*

*"I loved how well-gearred towards young people the Honey, I Shrunk the Orchestra concerts were. It was great to see how much the audience loved it! And I think the people at CCC are very special - everybody's so positive and lovely to work with."*

*"The laughter of the children and the post-concert meet-the-musicians sessions [are most memorable]. Both the parents and children [are] so appreciative of the day."*

*"I will always clear my diary for CCC."*

*"Honestly it's all fantastic and fun. Owen drumming and cycling at the same time is worth turning up for! Love the dressing up and sense of playing as well as you can, whilst completely not taking yourself seriously at all. Kids love it."*

# TIMELINE

Film launch and schools' workshops



Concerts with the RSNO



Schools' workshops



Screenings in schools along with Music & Art workshops



AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL



Concerts with the RSNO



Essential Orchestra performances



Essential Orchestra performances



Small ensemble touring



## STRAND 1: CONCERTS WITH THE RSNO

### THE HAUNTED CONCERT HALL & A CHRISTMAS CAROL

*"I always felt **very excited** for the part that was going to come next. I saw **smiley faces** on the people that were singing."*

Young Reviewer, age 8

Reach: 8,576

Equivalent to 63% of CCC's live audience in 2024/25, our flagship RSNO performances were a hit, with ticket sales 11% higher than in 2023/24.

Our Halloween spectacular came recommended by Classic FM and included a new commission by Claire McCue, brilliantly performed by the RSNO Children's Chorus. A screen above the orchestra offered scope for creativity, such as the animation of children's drawings, provided by students at the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), as has become tradition. Backstage footage of CCC's Artistic Director and Presenter, Owen Gunnell, was shown at key points, helping to bring the plot to life. Owen, seemingly unaware of ghostly sightings (provided by dancers from The Manor School of Ballet) came up against the culprits during the penultimate piece (*Dies Irae* from *Symphonie Fantastique* - Berlioz), setting off a hilarious attempt to escape them and save the concert halls as a 'Ghostbuster'.

Paul Whittaker OBE, delivered BSL interpretation, very much as part of the narrative as he hid from the spooky figures that were obvious to him (and missed by Owen)! The audience were on their feet for a game of musical statues and again at the finale for standing ovations.

Two further guest artists helped us celebrate the spirit of Christmas through a retelling of Charles Dickens' festive tale: newly graduated actors from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Connor Fallan and Alistair Robertson, as Scrooge and Bob Cratchit, who gave dynamic performances. Booking data suggests that around 20% of families attend both RSNO concerts – to boost this figure in 2025/26, we're trialling a 10% off 'bundle' offer.

*"It was the best day ever! I felt so proud. It made me even more determined to become a singer."* RSNO Children's Chorus member





## STRAND 2: ESSENTIAL ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCES

### HONEY, I SHRUNK THE ORCHESTRA & OUT OF THIS WORLD

Reach: 2,588

Freelance musicians selected for our Essential Orchestra know that genuinely having fun on stage is the best way to inspire. Their smiles, laughter and energy were on display during our latest concert, *Honey, I Shrunk the Orchestra* – which drew the largest audience in Aberdeen (818) since early 2020. The concept was designed to put the orchestra under the microscope revealing the inner workings of each section and highlighting the smallest instruments capable of big sounds (e.g., the piccolo and piccolo trumpet). It was also intended to showcase a 'music and nature' theme and encourage age-appropriate dialogue around the environment.

Set/costumes created a musical garden - music stands were ivy-clad, watering cans and flowers decorated the stage, and umbrellas hung from the lighting rig.

*Waggle Dance* by rising female composer, Aileen Sweeney, received its premiere in Dundee. The cheerful and frenzied melodies (with a traditional Scottish flair) were passed between sections of the orchestra, much like worker bees in the hive, and young children were spontaneously dancing in the aisles.

***"We loved it all. The brilliant costumes and beautiful set, the enthusiasm of the orchestral players, the high standard of performance, the musical content, the fun."***

***"My grandsons especially loved the gnomes and the percussionist on roller skates. They are still talking about it!"***





**STRAND 3: SMALL ENSEMBLE TOURING**  
**PETER AND THE WOLF ON TOUR**

Reach: 911

The beloved musical story for children by Prokofiev, performed by CCC's Wind Quintet, (plus a variety of pieces that conjure the imagination) proved popular at Corn Exchange, Haddington. It was our first time at the venue, and the team were immediately in touch to arrange a repeat visit next spring as a co-promotion. Due to demand, we ran two showings of the concert in both St Andrews (Laidlaw Music Centre) and Perth (Theatre), welcoming fully intergenerational audiences – from babies to great grandparents. We were close to selling out across the board – reaching 97% capacity on average. 44% of our surveyed audience told us they booked to provide something cultural for their family.

Young woodwind and percussion players under instruction at Perth & Kinross Instrumental Service, were invited to the rehearsal in Perth.

A bassoonist in S3 at Blairgowrie High School was particularly appreciative: *"Thanks so much, it's been really cool to see backstage and how things work – I heard sections of lots of the pieces and everyone testing different dynamic levels for balance and really enjoyed talking to the musicians."*

*"I enjoyed the dramatic music, and the narrator told the story really well. We got to meet the band afterwards, play the xylophone and try the wolf's mask on. I would definitely like to see more concerts."*

Child, age 7, MixUp Theatre

*"Everything was really high quality. The storytelling, the music, the engagement, the talking with the performers after the show. You can feel the confidence and experience of the team!"* Parent





## STRAND 4: DIGITAL ACTIVITY

### DJANGO'S JOURNEY & MISTERSTOURWORM

Film views: 2,106

Fulfilling our pledge to integrate digital work into our Season, (ensuring wider access free of financial and geographical barriers), we publicised material devised in 2023/24, and created new content for release this autumn.

#### *Django's Journey* - launched in 2024/25

Our *Django's Journey* film (focusing on the Gypsy Jazz genre and how sounds travel/adapt between cultures) plus an accompanying learning resource was made available via our social media platforms, and Education Scotland's website. We hosted an inaugural film premiere event at Citizen M in Glasgow, inviting musicians, the Board, our staff team and Family Forum members on 7 September 2024. It has since been viewed in 29 out of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities.

***"The kids LOVED it! The full school watched during assembly. It had their complete attention, they were singing and dancing along. More like this, please!"*** Head Teacher, South Lanarkshire

The *Django's Journey* resource, and our *Roving Reviewers* activity pack combined address numerous Curriculum for Excellence outcomes: eleven for Literacy; nine Expressive Arts; four Social Studies; three Health and Wellbeing and one for Modern Languages.

***"I'm using Roving Reviewers here in Kintyre, Argyll and Bute, to help with my personal enquiry as a student teacher about how to get music into schools for non-musicians...This is definitely something any teacher could use and the children are engaged, asking questions and wanting to listen to more music. Thank you for a great resource."***





## ***Misterstourworm* - created in 2024/25 (for release in 2025/26)**

Sanjeev Kohli, well known for his comedy role in *Still Game*, gave a rather more serious performance to narrate the Orcadian legend of a sinister sea-serpent in our latest concert film, *Misterstourworm*. Recorded at Clockwork Studios during November 2024 and edited in February 2025, it is due for public release in September (along with versions featuring BSL interpretation, Gaelic translation and animated subtitles). Aimed at a slightly older age group (7+), the film showcases the mystical orchestral work by Savourna Stevenson set to words by Stuart Paterson, as well as traditional Scottish music.

Our resource (of the same name) relating to the film, will provide step-by-step activities designed to encourage active listening skills and individuality.



*My Instrument and Me* is a further resource that has been created to aid recruitment and retention for Instrumental Music Services. It features professional demo videos and short 'peer reviews' as to the benefits and qualities specific instruments have, and why children have chosen to learn them.

***"My trumpet means the world to me. I chose my instrument when I was 6 because I liked making a lot of noise! Playing in the orchestra is my favourite hobby because I get to spend time with friends and I like the challenge of all our different parts interweaving to play together."*** Carter, age 11

***"Our whole family's life is changed by our involvement in music and Carter is most definitely leading the way. We are finally convinced every child should have more music in their life from a very young age."*** Carter's mother







## STRAND 5: SCHOOLS' ENGAGEMENT

Reach: 1,524  
60 Sessions

We strengthened our relationship with Dunard Primary in Maryhill (Glasgow), where 55% of children live in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1-2). The school has a multicultural population with around 25 different languages being spoken. CCC musicians delivered 30 sessions (up from 21 last year) providing an element of "consistency and community" which was extremely valued. CCC's Artistic Director became a familiar face, with many pupils passing him in the hallway with a *"Hey Owen"*, or *"Hi music man!"* They would frequently seek him out between sessions for a chat or an opportunity to play the marimba.

Four enthusiastic pupils were selected to pilot a workshop session and meet with professional musician and artist, Kirsty Matheson to produce a 10-minute film that forms an integral part of the *Misterstourworm* resource.

*"CCC's work not only inspires a love for music but also fosters creativity and a sense of wonder that resonates with our children. Having witnessed the enthusiasm, and engagement of the children (and adults) who attend these concerts and workshops, I strongly support and commend their work, and I encourage others to get involved."* Kevin McIsaac Stevenson, CREATE Champion at Dunard Primary School

*"Before this, I thought music was just playing but now I think it's about feeling too."* P5 pupil





## CCC's RESIDENCY: YEAR 2

Acorns to Oaks	Transition support for new P1s and their P7 buddies – including pop-up jazz trio performances, playground samba & planting bulbs	19 September 2024
Music and Art (pilot)	Six workshops led by Kirsty Matheson	24 & 25 October 2024
The Haunted Concert Hall & A Christmas Carol	Families invited to public performances as CCC's guests	26 October 2024 1 December 2024
Music Tells a Story Week	20 workshops over a week creating soundtracks to original stories written by each class culminating in a sharing event (P4-7)	10 – 14 March 2025
Peter and the Wolf	Three performances allowing the full school access to the CCC concert experience	16 May 2025



## ACTIVITY IN ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS:

CCC musician and artist Kirsty Matheson encouraged pupils to discover how music can represent colours and emotions - supporting self-expression in abstract formats. Participants were encouraged to make marks on the page to rhythm at first, then melody - building to paintings/drawings based on excerpts from *Mars* and *Venus* (Holst's *The Planets*). The key message shared was that there's no 'right', 'wrong', 'good' or 'bad' - only individual/authentic responses. A participant in Inveraray with Autism who usually struggles with attendance beyond lunchtime chose to stay because he was so engaged with the art workshop. Another told CCC staff that it was his *"best day ever at school"*.

In the week leading to the *Peter and the Wolf* concerts in Perth, CCC musicians delivered 15 interactive workshops across the Local Authority (stretching 33 miles Northwest and 24 miles South of Perth, to engage pupils (P3-7) - the vast majority of whom were not learning an instrument. Our post-project survey (representing 68 pupils) indicated that 100% would like a return visit from CCC. We were rated 4.3 out of 5 for delivery.

*"It's really cool you can make all those sounds with just one instrument."*

*"I didn't realise you can do this by just practicing!"*

Misterstourworm	Advanced film screenings, Music and Art Workshops and performances by Savourna Stevenson (harp/composer); Kirsty Matheson (double bass) and Owen Gunnell (percussion) across five schools in Argyll & Bute	5 - 9 May 2025
Peter and the Wolf	Workshops in 15 schools across Perth and Kinross for P3-7	19 - 23 May 2025
General Musicianship	Cairns Primary School P2-4, Cambuslang	13 June 2025



## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

### EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- **British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation** was given at nine performances, where narration/song featured. *Peter and the Wolf* in Perth saw the return of one loyal Deaf audience member for the 4th time – who told us that Anne Whittaker's signing transformed the experience for them.
- We **showcased female talent** through all strands: composers, performers and workshop leaders
- Ticket prices remained comparatively low – our audience survey rated our **affordability 4.2 out of 5**
- **730 free tickets** were offered (5% more than last Season) via our social inclusion network of charities, including for a new partnership with Glasgow Women's Aid.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- **61%** of our surveyed audience travelled either by walking/cycling, public transport, or hybrid/electric car.
- We are committed to improving sustainable methods of touring – providing buses to encourage group travel, or booking concert venues/times based on train options for musicians.
- Staging/props for *Honey, I Shrunk the Orchestra* had either been recycled from previous productions, or purchased/made for repeated use in future projects, with the help of Cue Props – who operate from a sustainable perspective.
- Our membership of the Scottish Classical Sustainability Group continues. We are currently researching ways to minimise our digital footprint and our findings will inform planning for a new website.

### DIGITAL PROGRESS

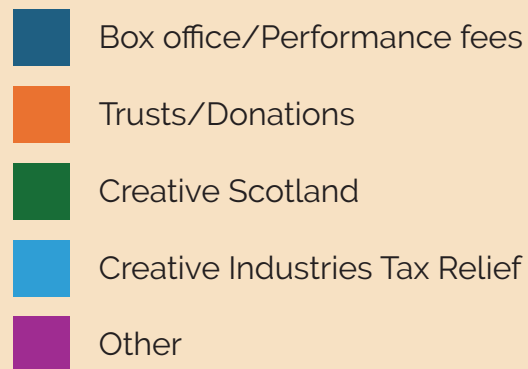
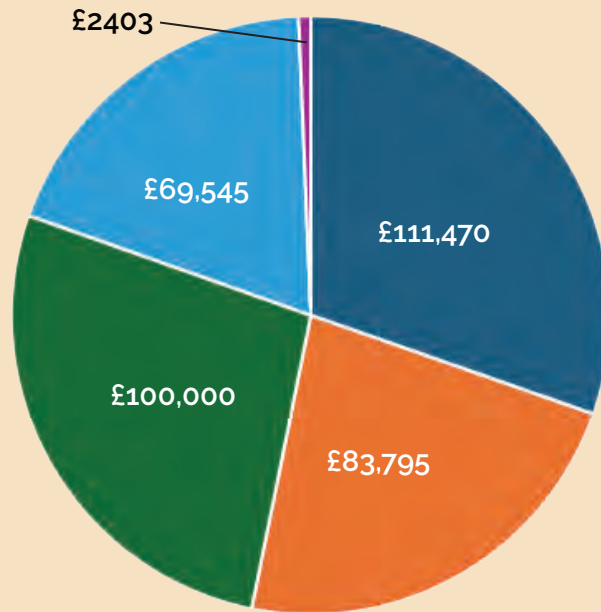
- We continue our commitment to the development of CCC's digital output and progress. With the increased production of activities (including the upcoming *Misterstourworm* film and resource and *My Instrument and Me*), we are developing a loyal online base. The increase of film footage and digital assets which we have built up over the last two years has been hugely beneficial to this progress.



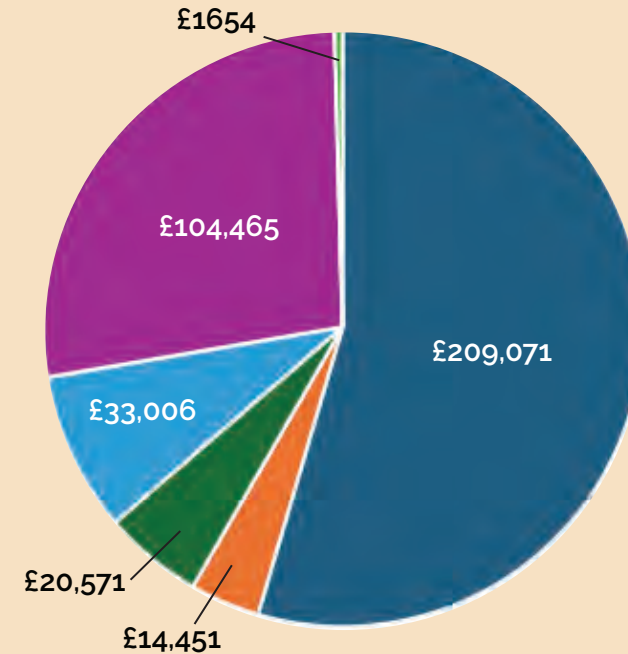


# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## INCOME: £367,213



## EXPENDITURE: £383,218\*



*\*Deficit supported by agreed spend of £15,000 from unrestricted designated reserves*



## OUR SUPPORTERS



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

In addition to Creative Scotland funding (2024/25 was Year 2 of a 2-year Extended Programme Fund grant), we are hugely thankful for the kind support of individual donors, and for generous grants from the following Trusts and Foundations:

Alexander Moncur Trust  
Commonweal Fund  
Cruden Foundation  
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
Eda, Lady Jardine Charitable Trust  
Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust  
Jennie S Gordon Memorial Foundation  
JTH Charitable Trust  
Leisure & Culture Dundee  
Leng Charitable Trust  
Maurice & Nicola Taylor Charitable Trust  
Northwood Charitable Trust  
Tay Charitable Trust  
The Educational Institute of Scotland (Sponsorship of the Arts)

The Gannochy Trust  
The Hugh Fraser Foundation  
The John Mather Trust  
The McGlashan Charitable Trust  
The Pear Tree Fund for Music  
The R J Larg Family Trust  
The Ronald Miller Foundation  
The Saints and Sinners Club of Scotland  
The Society of Deacons and Free Preses of Glasgow  
The Stevenston Charitable Trust  
The W. A. Cargill Fund  
The William Syson Foundation  
Verden Sykes Trust  
Ye Cronies

### CCC's BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ian Mills (Chair)  
Joan McDowall (Honorary Treasurer)  
Max Rink (Company Secretary)  
Morag Campbell  
Anna Crawford  
Lucinda Keith  
Lord Donald Graham

### CCC TEAM

Owen Gunnell	<i>Artistic Director &amp; Presenter</i>
Catherine Earnshaw	<i>Creative Director</i>
Pippa Barnwell	<i>Chief Executive</i>
Jemma Stewart	<i>Development Manager</i>
Riitta Koljonen	<i>Project Manager</i>
Catherine Ward	<i>Marketing Manager</i>

*Photography by Sally Jubb, Fraser Band, Calum Mitchell and Max McGregor.  
CCC Artwork by Rebecca Pitt.*



## WHAT'S NEXT IN 2025/26

High-level themes (as per our Business Plan to 2028) will focus on nature/the environment and self-expression, as we deliver:

- 14 concerts (Strands 1-3) in Aberdeen, Banchory, Dundee, Edinburgh, Giffnock, Glasgow, Haddington, Inverness, Perth and St Andrews
- A new film (see below), plus two digital learning resources (Strand 4)
- Work with Gaelic and refugee communities, as well as in healthcare settings (Strand 5)

### THE STORY COLLECTOR

CCC is set to empower children in the creative driving seat – helping to shape our next family programme. Assigned a season-of-the-year theme, approx. 80 young people will explore personal experiences of living in Scotland – uncovering memories of celebrations and annual traditions. Owen Gunnell and composer, Aileen Sweeney, along with a trusted freelance musician, and a practitioner from the Village Storytelling Centre, will offer hands-on activities that promote confidence, hone listening skills and help the children to connect, share, and make music together.

A single narrative will then be created from material gathered that reflects both the individuality and collective voice of participants. This will form the basis of a commission by Aileen for chamber ensemble (12 musicians) plus narrator – sitting at the heart of our next concert film.

***“My imagination and love for music was sparked by CCC concerts. I’m looking forward to hearing young people’s stories – it will be a great source of inspiration to me, knowing the far-reaching impact this project will have on the children of Scotland.”*** Aileen Sweeney, Composer

