

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Individual

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Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

I spent 16 years working in the classical music industry between 2007 and 2023, primarily in marketing. Over time, it became clear that the answer to shrinking audiences was not simply better advertising techniques. It was a cultural issue: for too long, our fine arts have been dominated by the goal of showcasing the excellence of performers, limiting the audience to a shrinking group of connoisseurs. This grew out of an outdated idea that there should be a gap between “fine arts” and “entertainment.”

However, that gap no longer exists in the minds of many people. In fact, there is a window of opportunity to connect with larger audiences. Due to the rise of streaming services, newer audiences are stumbling across classical music all the time—but there isn’t a real system for giving them the tools to appreciate it, nor a purposeful plan to connect them with older forms of music. While classical music is my experience, a similar dilemma surely exists for most other fine arts forms.

Therefore, I propose that any new cultural policy seeks to retain the pursuit of Excellence as a good goal to position Australian artists as world leaders. However, Excellence should be just one leg of a three-legged stool that also includes:

1) **POPULARISING** art forms that are in danger of becoming too niche. Using classical music as an example, this might mean extra funding for deeper collaborations between classical ensembles and pop groups (not just the odd show for extra cash). It might mean raising the profile of composers who write across multiple spheres—the concert hall, film, television, and popular albums—or commissioning popular artists to write symphonies. Rather than letting popular entertainment and fine arts exist in separate, fragile silos, let’s grow broader networks so all art forms grow in quality.

2) Funding explicit **EDUCATION AND PERFORMANCE PIPELINES** that allow people from all walks of life to learn about and take part in high-end art forms. (I would like to see more funding for the ABC to act as a central hub for this - the ABC growing in its role to point people to new art forms, while arts organisations simultaneously send their newer audiences back to the ABC to grow in their appreciation.)

In short, funding should not just go to individual projects and organisations, but to the creation of an infrastructure that places Australian arts organisations in the broader context of working side by side to create better arts and entertainment for our country and the world.