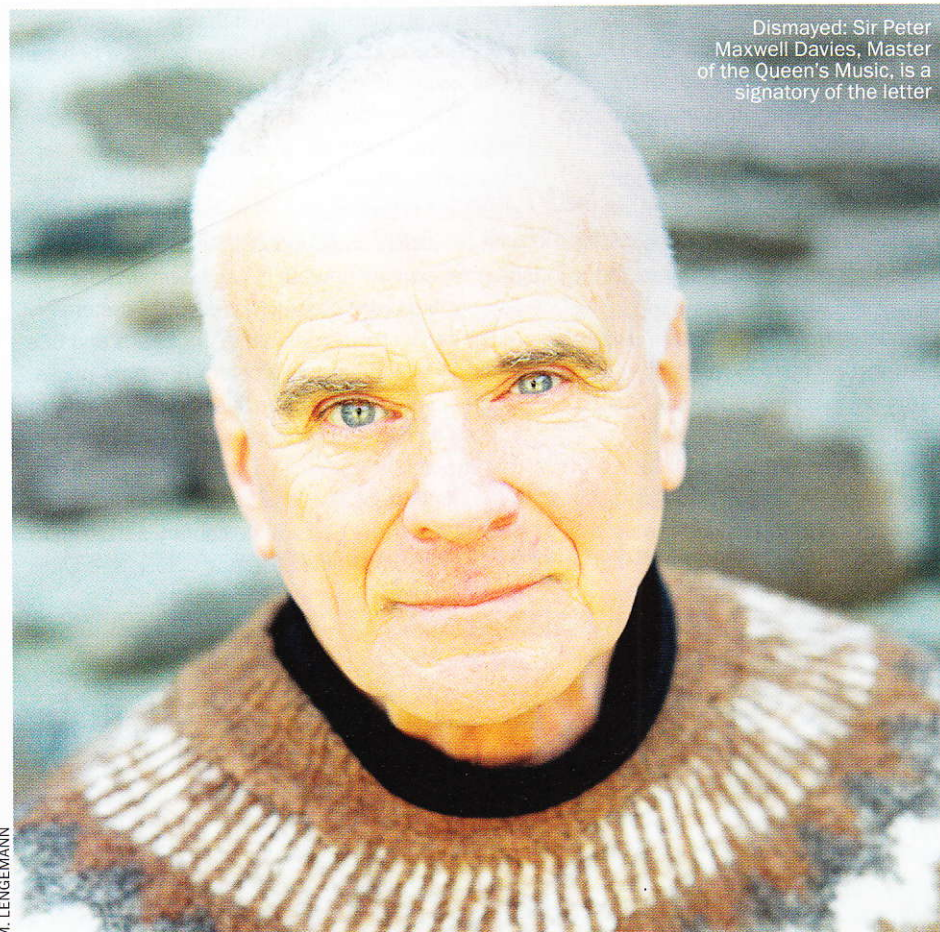


# Creative Scotland scrambles response to open letter

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Dismayed: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Master of the Queen's Music, is a signatory of the letter

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**One hundred leading Scottish and Scottish-based artists have written an open letter to Creative Scotland (CS) expressing dismay at what they see as an ongoing crisis in the funding organisation.**

The artists, who include composers James MacMillan and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Red Note Ensemble artistic co-director John Harris, and Fiona Robertson, Pete Stollery and Mark Hope of Aberdeen's contemporary music Sound festival, highlight 'ill-conceived decision-making; unclear language, lack of empathy and regard for Scottish culture'.

Referring to CS's announcement that it would move 49 of its ensembles away from regular, fixed-term funding and on to support on a project-by-project basis, they write: 'We observe an organisation with a

confused and intrusive management style married to a corporate ethos that seems designed to set artist against artist and company against company in the search for resources.'

Following months of anger from the Scottish cultural community against CS, the letter has been hailed as a significant step, both in bringing artists together with a common voice, and in provoking reaction from CS. A CS insider was quoted as saying: 'This is a game-changer, this is the big one.' It is understood that many more in the arts community wanted to sign the original letter but were concerned about the future funding they would receive from CS if they added their names. However, more than 300 have since signed an online version.

An initial response to the letter from

a CS spokesperson, promising 'positive action across a number of operational and strategic areas' was widely derided for using the same management jargon that the original letter criticised.

CS chairman Sir Sandy Crombie later issued a more lengthy response, however, in which he admitted there had been problems, writing: 'I think it is fair to say, and unsurprising, that in some cases our working methods are still developing. Are we perfect? No. Can we do better in a number of areas? Yes.' But he also claimed that the 100-signatory letter was short on specifics on which CS could act, saying: 'In choosing to be concise, you have of course sacrificed the provision of detail at a level that my board colleagues and I can investigate.' One artist described Crombie's response as having a tone of 'patrician emollient'.

Despite the criticisms, CS chief executive Andrew Dixon asserted that he would not step aside and had confidence in his senior team. He also announced that he was setting up a sub-committee to investigate CS's relationship with artists, which will report to the CS board in the new year.

Scottish culture secretary Fiona Hyslop later issued a statement explaining that, although it was not the Scottish government's place to interfere in CS's decisions, she had asked the board to engage directly with the artistic sector: 'I have made it clear that it is imperative that these issues get sorted.'

Meanwhile, Edinburgh-based writer and director Jen McGregor has set up an artists' open space meeting using a room offered by CS in its Waverley Gate offices at the end of October, with several of CS's senior management team expected to attend.

In a further statement two days after his open letter Sir Sandy set out a timetable for further responses from CS's board, stating that he would report online the results of meetings on 22 October and 6 December.

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