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December 2006 £4.50

New strategy for Scottish National Youth Music Initiative

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The Scottish Executive's Youth Music Initiative (YMI), set up in 2003 to give children and young people the opportunity to develop musical talent, is to be extended with increased funding and rebranded the National Youth Music Strategy (NYMS). Administered by the Scottish Arts Council, the scheme was initially given £17.5m for three years, but this will now be extended to 2008, with £10m a year in funding.

Launching the new strategy, culture minister Patricia Ferguson acknowledged the critical role music plays in the development of young people. 'Not only does it encourage creativity, providing opportunities for self-expression, it also builds confidence, self-esteem and emotional well being.'

There are two strands to the initiative, which supports projects and activities set up by local authorities both inside and outside the formal education sector. The NYMS provides a framework for all organisations and individuals working in music with children and young people throughout the country when planning and implementing programmes of work. Over the next two years, the aim is to provide music-making experiences for all children and young people in Scotland, build up the capacity of the music education sector to cope with the extra demand, encourage more young people to participate and develop individual talent to its full potential.

David MacDonald, the SAC's youth music manager, says the new strategy will bring together all the elements across the musical sectors in a more coherent way. However he admits one of the biggest challenges will be to ensure there is enough quality tuition available, particularly skilled music teachers or facilitators. The SAC has just commissioned the RSAMD to conduct a training needs analysis, which will provide an audit of the training and CPD available across the country to identify gaps in provision. The results of the report are due in March.