

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Ymchwiliad i'r achosion o COVID-19 ac effaith y feirws ar ddiwylliant, y diwydiannau creadigol, treftadaeth, cyfathrebu a chwaraeon / Inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on culture, creative industries, heritage, communications and sport

CWLC COV44

Ymateb gan Unigolyn / Response from an Individual

RICHARD BAKER COMPOSER & CONDUCTOR

18 June 2020

Helen Mary Jones MS
Acting Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Dear Chair,

Re: Music Making and Musicians during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Safeguarding Public Health is quite correctly the Welsh Government's primary concern during the COVID-19 crisis. Whilst so little is known about the way in which the virus spreads, caution is both understandable and prudent.

Without doubt, the best way to advocate for live music is by doing it. But musicians are unable to work until we have solid research and Public Health guidelines to govern both rehearsal and performance. I was dismayed to read last night's statement from the UK Government Culture Secretary that he was only now convening a panel of medical experts to advise on this. There is a good deal of research already in this area, from Germany, Austria and other EU nations, where live instrumental and vocal performance has resumed already.

It is vital that Wales avails itself of the best international research in shaping its advice to the sector so that we do not fall behind. The entire live music ecology is in danger of collapse at a time when it is already under severe strain owing to the uncertainties surrounding Brexit. Many of Wales's internationally renowned musicians will be able to work overseas before they will be able to work here in the UK.

I would urge the committee not to wait to follow the UK Govt DCMS lead on this, but rather look beyond these shores for good practice in how to resume activity safely.

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Baker". Below the signature is a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line.

Dr Richard Baker MA PhD FGS

