



Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – MUSIC**

**Organisation/Venue: Aberdeen Bach Choir  
St Machar's Cathedral**

**Title of Event: Choir and Organ Recital**

**Type of Event: Concert**

**Date of Visit: Sunday 3 December 2006**

**Overall Rating Rating 4**

The concert was well presented and attended by an appreciative audience. Performers were of high standard and the atmosphere in the ancient cathedral setting was very powerful. My only reservation was that the featured organist did seem to dominate an event billed as Aberdeen Bach Choir. This may reflect my unfamiliarity with the genre rather than the balance of the concert.

The choir appears to be in a transitional stage, their new musical director needs time to fully introduce his own interpretation and style. The second half and particularly his interpretation of the final piece, Marcel Dupre's Four Motets was extremely strong and dynamic, showing great potential.

Name: Graham Stephen

Date: 04/12/2006

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

*Please circle the relevant title*

8 This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named below. It has been prepared by either a specialist Advisor, or an officer of the Scottish Arts Council, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work and to the management of the venue, if the venue is core funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The report may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council. It may also be used by the Council to report on the overall performance of its Core Funded organisations.

**Evaluators should enter their rating under each section, explaining briefly their reason for the rating with reference to their comments under each section. Ratings should be given in accordance with the following:**

**1-Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.

**2-Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.

**3-Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.

**4-Good** – well conceived and executed

**5-Excellent** – conceived and executed to a high standard.

## 1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, taking account of the following:

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Quality of production – was the event successful overall in relation to any stated aims (e.g. in the programme or other printed material)	4	Extremely competent performance of the chosen material under their new director. Recent death of previous longstanding musical director had an obvious influence on the early part of the evening – second half was much more dynamic and engaging.
Vision and imagination	4	Choir performance choices were varied and interesting good mix of material. The organ pieces felt overlong and overplayed. More from the choir would have made for a better balanced performance.
Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments	4	Choir and musical director were excellent – particularly in the second half, they appeared well rehearsed. Organist, technically excellent although appeared to overplay, did get in the way of the singers during some parts of the evening.
Quality of Presentation – was the professionally presented from a technical point of view	4	Acceptable presentation talking into account the type of venue, a large very old cathedral. Sound was as good as can be expected although organ did tend to overshadow the choir at times.
Audience – assess the appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	Well attended by an appreciative audience – venue was possibly 70% full, difficult to judge as seating was in pews. Reaction was subdued first half, probably due to recent loss of previous director. However by the end audience reaction was positive and sustained.
Educational Value – comment where appropriate		

## 2. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and the venue, with reference to the checklist below, including additional comments/observations.

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Suitability of the venue for the event	5	The music was written to be performed in this type of venue so any minor complaints about seating comfort and sound are irrelevant.
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>1</sup>	5	Programme had extensive background info, translations, performer and composer biographies.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>2</sup>	5	Well publicised locally, posters, internet listings and press.
Ease of booking and payment	5	Advance booking through local Box Office, all forms of payment accepted or tickets on the door.
Location of venue	5	Easily accessible, reasonable parking considering area
External signage and signposting	5	Venue itself is well signposted, posters for the performance were in evidence outside the venue
Internal directional signage	5	Adequate for the performance, toilets etc all signposted
Access and provision for disabled people	3	Access appeared adequate – not sure about wheelchair viewing positions, if any. If there was a designated area I didn't see it.
Timing of the event	5	Good
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	3	Appeared to be no one in attendance on the door to deal with latecomers. Door tickets sales appeared to be a pile of cash in an open plastic box. No sign of anyone in charge of the event.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>3</sup>	5	All publicity, programmes etc displayed the logo prominently

<sup>1</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

<sup>2</sup> Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised, commenting on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

<sup>3</sup> The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:

"The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc."

Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.