



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

It should be noted the views expressed in this evaluation are intended to represent, as far as possible, an objective aesthetic judgement. Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences.

Artist/Company:	Camerata Scotland (National Youth Orchestras of Scotland)
Venue:	Aberdeen Music Hall
Title of Event:	Concert (Spring Tour 2008)
Type of Event:	Live Concert Performance
Date of Visit:	27 March 2008
Overall Rating:	4 <i>(Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses. If the management of the event affects the overall enjoyment of the event, please comment, but the overall rating should be based on the artistic merit of the event.)</i>
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Date:	31/3/08
Scottish Arts Council Officer (Head of Music)	

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named above. 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 will form evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework and 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 Joint Board to report on the overall performance of its 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, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	Vision and imagination of work - Quality of ideas, skills in execution; if you've seen the work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on the comparison.	4/5	Improvements were obvious in the ensemble's energy and quality of performance. Camerata Scotland looked and sounded much more like a professional orchestra. As these are all senior players, some of whom are already working as freelance professionals whilst completing respective studies, there is an expected higher level of playing, which was in the main forthcoming.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned. If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.	4	The juxtaposition of the Ligeti with two of Ravel's best known works was successful. Added that the Romanian Dances of Bartok underlined the influence of that composer on Ligeti, the programme gelled very well. This was the first of a three-concert tour for Camerata to fit their course and concert performances with the availability of members during the Easter recess.
All	Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes. Education events – see ¹ below for guidance	4	The Ligeti was a good choice to open the concert and Diego Masson allowed the orchestra to play. He demonstrated a light touch but his direction and beat were very clear. Leon McCauley was soloist in the Ravel Concerto in G. His performance was assured, but of note was the high quality of accompaniment provided by Masson and the orchestra. Bartok's Romanian Folk dances worked less well with some scrappy ensemble playing exposed because of the simplicity of the music, but Camerata obviously enjoyed playing Ravel's masterpiece Mother Goose Suite in its ballet setting with two additional orchestral interludes.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	4	There were some notable individual contributions, not least from the two flutes in the ballet suite, the first horn in the concerto and Cor Anglais, again in the ballet suite – especially notable as the player had substituted at the last moment. Stronger playing from the Leader would have been welcome, but overall the string ensemble was of a high quality. As already stated the Bartok needed the same high levels of concentration demonstrated in the rest of the programme.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc		

¹ Education is a bridge between artform excellence and increased access and participation, and it is people centred. Providing opportunities for learning and progressing in an artform or using an artform to address other, non-artistic, outcomes are equally valid; in either case a high quality strategic approach is required in order to benefit the participants and the organisation. Delivery can be through workshops, post/pre-show discussions, outreach work, etc aimed at any age group.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.		
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.		
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.		
Dance, Theatre	Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.		
All	<p>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang</p> <p>Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>	4/5	The orchestra looked good and sounded as if they enjoyed playing together. The choice of Diego Masson as conductor worked extremely well and under his clear direction, the young players were able to demonstrate a consistent level of technical ability in their performance. This resulted in an equally consistent level of performance from Camerata.
All	<p>Audience</p> <p>Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit</p> <p>Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc</p>		It is obvious that the timing of performances for NYOS that predominantly surrounds the availability of players during school/college holidays is not always the best time for concert giving, as evidenced in this performance and the New Year Concerts (NYOS). Without a huge marketing drive, which would be disproportionately expensive, it is difficult to see how best NYOS can tackle this, but their CEO is both aware of the problem and willing to see how they might address it. The audience in Aberdeen, whilst accepting that the Ellen Kent Company was performing at His Majesty's Theatre, was small and however appreciative an audience is, it is disheartening, especially for young players to see so poor an audience with respect to numbers. Educationally for the participants and for the audience the educational benefit was high.
All	Additional Interpretative activity – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.	4/5	These Spring Tour performances were the culmination of training and rehearsal sessions with Diego Masson, organised as part of the NYOS portfolio core activities.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	Outcomes of education activity – what learning/skills development took place? What did participants take away with them? Are education resources being provided for follow up work? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum (formal or informal)?	5	As stated, the benefit is high.

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. Please try to view the venue and the services, and interpretative material as though you had never visited it before eg if you did not know the venue's location, how easy would it be to find your way there, and to find your way around once you had arrived?

Criteria	Comment
Suitability of the venue for the event	Aberdeen Music Hall is a good acoustic performance space for this type of ensemble.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programmes were informative.
Publicity/ pre-publicity – leaflets, posters, websites, etc. What is produced, is it easy to understand and where can you get the information? Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.	Publicity was mostly contained within NYOS marketing with the additional benefit of commercial sponsorship in Aberdeen from Maclay, Murray & Spens, which was, of course, welcome.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Aberdeen Music Hall is in the centre of Aberdeen City.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Fully DDA compliant.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	As already stated, the timing of NYOS concert activities in school/college holiday associated periods is subject to review, but the concert timing was excellent.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	On all publicity material – good.

² In press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, company's website, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising, recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.) Where the event is publicised in the programme brochure of another organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

3. Organisation's Comments (optional)

This is the organisation's opportunity to respond to points raised within this assessment. Please do not feel obliged to fill this section in. In the spirit of the Quality Framework, we would ask that any comments are self-evaluating, providing an insight as to why, if there is, a major disagreement of response between the organisation and the evaluation, in a constructive way.

This will not alter the rating given by the assessment, but will allow the organisation the opportunity to give their opinion/feedback. The Scottish Arts Council reserves the right to edit comments if they are deemed to be libellous or defamatory.

As the Scottish Arts Council implements the Quality Framework internally, we intend to publish artistic evaluations on organisations that we support regularly on our website. The final artistic evaluation, including the organisation's response will be published on a quarterly basis on our website.

Please keep your response to max 500 words. If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.