



## ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

**Artist/Company: NYOS**

**Venue: GRCH (Glasgow Royal Concert Hall)**

**Title of Event : NYOS Spring Concerts 2010**

**Type of Event: Live Concert Performance(S)**

**Date of Visit: 12 April 2010**

**Overall Rating: Very Good**

**Name: Ian Smith**

**Date: 13 April 2010**

**Scottish Arts Council Officer: Head of Music**

**Specialist Advisor: N/A**

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 on 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 future 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:**

**Very poor-** standard falls well below what is acceptable.

**Poor** - not well conceived and executed

**Satisfactory**

**Good** - well conceived and executed

**Very Good** – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

**Excellent** – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of ideas</li> <li>if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons</li> </ul>	VG	<p>These Spring concerts in Edinburgh and Glasgow featured two ensembles from the NYOS roster: NCOS (National Children's Orchestra of Scotland) and NYJOS (National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland). The first half of the concert featured NCOS, conducted by John Grant and featured the bassoon soloist Karen Geoghegan performing works by Smetana, Jacobi, Shostakovitch and Tchaikovsky. The second half of the programme was dedicated to Kenny Wheeler's Sweet Time Suite performed by NYJOS under the direction of Andrew Bain (MD) and Malcolm Edmonstone (Kbd).</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation?</li> <li>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</li> </ul>	VG	<p>Considering that the average age of the members of NCOS is 9-13, this was an extraordinary performance in many respects. The Smetana (Vltava from Ma Vlast) was a good choice to begin as it allowed the string section time to settle into some very melodic playing with sustained phrasing throughout. The Carl Jacobi Introduction/Polonaise for bassoon and orchestra was followed by Shostakovitch's Tahiti Trot (Tea for Two), both orchestral "lollipops" that the players obviously enjoyed. The first half was completed by the Finale from Tchaikovsky's "Little Russian" Symphony No.2. As already intimated, the second half of the concert was dedicated entirely to Kenny Wheeler's challenging Sweet Time Suite which featured some excellent playing from the members of NYJOS. I am not fully convinced that the juxtaposition of classical and jazz in this way actually works as it would, in my view make equal sense to feature some of the great orchestral jazz influenced work of Ellington, Basie and Brubeck that could feature NYOS in a more balanced manner, but I would not wish to detract from the fact that the children's orchestra and NYJOS both performed well in this environment and it would be difficult for NCOS to sustain a full programme.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material?</li> <li>How well did it communicate the artistic themes?</li> <li>How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	VG	<p>The programme is much more complimentary to NYJOS in this format as, in the past they rarely received more than an A4 sheet describing their performance content, whereas the information available relating to this concert was both detailed and informative. The NYOS web-site's long overdue revision is now secure which significantly improves the NYOS offer to the public.</p>

<sup>1</sup> 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
All	<p><b>Performers/tutors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments.</li> <li>• How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience?</li> <li>• In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>	VG	<p>The performances from both ensembles were of a high standard and as already stated, in the case of NCOS, the age factor is also significant. The quality of the tutors employed by NYOS was a hugely significant factor, as the presence of a conductor, however clear and inspirational, must be accompanied by high quality tuition and guidance for such young musicians and that was obvious to this listener. There was a really homogenous feel to the respective sections of the orchestra and they also accompanied well in the Jacobi without any reductions in the string section. The soloist; Karen Geoghegan is certainly a young musician who has a potentially glittering professional career ahead of her and she performed the Jacobi, which is a very simple air &amp; variations with great aplomb. The playing of the orchestra in both Smetana and Tchaikovsky reflected fully the work of the tutors, whilst the contributions of principal oboe, bassoon and trombone in the Shostakovitch is worthy of special praise. The ensemble was disciplined on stage and the swift movement of the first violin section of their own chairs and music stands to accommodate the bassoon soloist was exemplary stage-craft that could well be followed by many of our professional ensembles. The entire ensemble properly turned front of stage to acknowledge applause and their audience, which was also refreshing.</p> <p>The input of both Malcolm Edmonstone and Andrew Bain to NYJOS has been significant, transforming the ensemble to its current high performing standard. Their professional tutelage is bearing fruit and none more significant than being able to perform a work that is considered by eminent jazz professionals to be extremely demanding. NYJOS presented a fine performance of Kenny Wheeler's suite and I particularly enjoyed and appreciated the MD's acknowledgement of respective soloists for the audience, who may not all have been jazz enthusiasts who would know that to applaud each individual soloist is the norm. There were significant individual contributions from tenor and alto/soprano saxes, trombone, flugel horn, drums and piano (Edmonstone), but the outstanding player by some distance was the bassist; Andrew Robb who could grace any professional ensemble. I was only disappointed in the sound which could have been much better and wonder why NYJOD did not employ its own dedicated sound engineer. The mike set-ups were all poor, with the exception of the tenor sax player and at times the brass sections were far too distant in the mix. There also seemed to be only one monitor on stage beside the pianist, which again is poor. I would also have liked more communication from the MD, but realise that he might have wished to perform the Suite in its entirety in segue for the eight movements, which I respect.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p><b>Choreography/Use of choreography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the work original?</li> <li>• How was the space used?</li> <li>• How many dancers were there and how were they used?</li> <li>• How long was the piece?</li> </ul>		

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Theatre	<b>Script</b> Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new work</li> <li>• second productions</li> <li>• classics where the original has been substantially changed</li> </ul>		
Theatre, Dance	<b>Direction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the work well interpreted?</li> <li>• Was it well cast?</li> <li>• Was it well presented?</li> </ul>		
Dance, Theatre	<b>Use of music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>• Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>		
Dance, Theatre	<b>Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were the costumes, set and lighting?</li> <li>• How did it work in the venue?</li> <li>• Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>		
All	<b>Quality of Public Engagement</b> Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience?</li> <li>• Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants?</li> <li>• Were you/ engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• What was their response?</li> <li>• Approximately how many people were there?</li> <li>• Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled?</li> <li>• Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many?</li> <li>• What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info?</li> <li>• Were these targeted at specific age groups?</li> </ul> Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred?</li> <li>• What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix?</li> <li>• Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning &amp; Development</li> <li>• What learning/skills development took place?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the art</li> </ul>	VG	<p>Whilst the audience was modest in numbers, it was certainly enthusiastic in its response to both performances. Both ensembles are about learning how best to hone performance skills which require intense concentration and focus and the input of professional trainers, performers and tutors was explicitly evident in both cases. There was a significant difference between ages and as already stated the children's orchestra sustained their concentration and focus very well, where in the case of NYJOS, this could more fairly thought to be expected. I think that NYOS might wish to experiment further with the juxtaposition of ensembles and could also consider utilising NYCOS for such possible endeavours artistically.</p> <p>The information available for these performances, both on-line and physical was excellent and shows that NYOS is now committed to higher quality marketing of their programmes.</p> <p>All young musicians are selected through audition and that process seems to work well, based on the evidence of this performance.</p> <p>I commend the high quality of tuition, especially with NCOS.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>produced by the participants?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project?</li> <li>• How were participants recruited?</li> <li>• Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</li> </ul> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		

## 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
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it easy to find?</li> <li>• Is it on a main transport route?</li> <li>• Are the spaces clean?</li> <li>• What were the sight lines like?</li> <li>• How big was it?</li> </ul>	<p>The GRCH is one of Europe's most significant performance spaces and as such provides an excellent opportunity for performance and access.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event?</li> <li>• Is there information on the venue's website?</li> </ul>	<p>Excellent.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in?</li> <li>• What publicity materials are produced?</li> <li>• Is it easy to understand?</li> <li>• Where can you get the information?</li> <li>• Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>?</li> </ul> <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>Of high quality as per my earlier comments. The Scottish Arts Council is acknowledged on printed and virtual material.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<sup>2</sup> 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.

Criteria	Comment																
<b>Timing of the event</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?</li> <li>Was the length appropriate?</li> </ul>	A slightly earlier 7pm start was appropriate, especially for the children and that was reflected both on stage and in the audience.																
<b>Signage and signposting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the entrance clearly marked?</li> <li>Is there clear internal directional signage?</li> <li>Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops?</li> </ul>	Excellent.																
<b>Access and provision for disabled people</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event</li> </ul> <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue?</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 510 1262 1032"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 510 823 577"></th> <th data-bbox="828 510 916 577">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="920 510 1165 577"></th> <th data-bbox="1169 510 1262 577">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 584 823 680">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="828 584 916 680">Y</td> <td data-bbox="920 584 1165 680">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1169 584 1262 680">N</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 687 823 761">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="828 687 916 761">N</td> <td data-bbox="920 687 1165 761">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1169 687 1262 761">Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 768 823 1032">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="828 768 916 1032">Y</td> <td data-bbox="920 768 1165 1032">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1169 768 1262 1032">Y</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	Y	Audio description of performances	N	Captioning	N	Lift/ramp	Y	Accessible toilets	Y	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	Y
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BSL interpretation	Y	Audio description of performances	N														
Captioning	N	Lift/ramp	Y														
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<b>Customer service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)</li> <li>If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?</li> </ul>	Excellent with additional NYOS staff in attendance.																

**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.