



Scottish **Arts** Council

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: GASD/Proiseàct nan Ealan

Venue: An Lanntair, Stornoway

Title of Event: Gaelic Arts Conference

Type of Event: Conference

Date of Visit: 8-9 May 2007

Overall Rating: 4

Name: Ian Smith Date: 30/5/07

Specialist Adviser: 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	The time-frame for planning the conference was comparatively short, but despite that, the content was well thought out and most of the contributions were informative and in certain cases, challenging.
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.	3/4	A longer lead time might have allowed the organisers more opportunity to get input from MSP's, even Ministers, but the impending election made that impossible.
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 event was undoubtedly successful as the main purpose was to finalise a strategy for Gaelic Arts Development which would be introduced in 2008/09 and complement the national plan for Gaelic.
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	The conference was, quite rightly conducted in Gaelic with simultaneous translation into English for the non Gaelic speakers. Some of the presenters had prepared a bilingual presentation, such as Fèisean nan Gàidheal, which was most helpful. The keynote speaker was particularly strong, as were contributions from Donnie Munro and Bord na Gaidhlig.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc		
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	4	There was a presentation from the youth drama programme from the summer Fèisean, which was most effective and entertaining.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.		

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
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	4	Excellent live music input from local youngsters in Stornoway.
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	The conference was well planned with appropriate break out sessions that appealed to every delegate.
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>	4	The delegates seemed to appreciate the programme and benefit from it and the important networking opportunities, for which there was sufficient time.
All	<p>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.</p>	4	The presentation given by Donnie Munro on the visual art exhibition at An Lanntair was particularly inspiring and reminded everyone how diverse this venue is and what potential it has for work not directly related to performance.
All	<p>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)?</p>	4	The conference had a significant education and personal development element.

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	An Lanntair was an excellent venue for this event and the staff worked hard to make everyone welcome.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Clear and concise information on hand.
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.	Good.
Ease of booking and payment	My booking was handled through Proiseact nan Ealan who could not have been more helpful.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	An Lanntair is Stornoway's major performance space and centrally located with easy access by air and sea.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Excellent provision, as one would expect from a recently built facility.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The organisers started the conference late on the first day to allow time for travel and finished on day 2 leaving time for everyone who needed to connect with flights and ferries.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	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.