



## 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: Scottish Ensemble in partnership with Theatre Cryptic & Tenebrae**

**Venue: Glasgow City Halls**

**Title of Event : Easter Promotion**

**Type of Event: Live Concert Performance**

**Date of Visit: 2 April 2010**

**Overall Rating: Excellent**

**Name: Ian Smith**

**Date: 28 April 2010**

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

Specialist Advisor

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	Vision and imagination of work <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>	Exc	The partnership with Cryptic, first realised at the world premiere performance of <i>Seven Words, Seven Icons, Seven Cities</i> , at the City of London Festival in 2009 (a Beyond Borders Commission), brought innovative and inspirational visual imagery enhancing and complimenting the highest level of performance from both the Scottish Ensemble and London-based professional a capella ensemble, Tenebrae. The above work by Nigel Osborne opened the programme which then featured Taverner's <i>Tears of the Angels</i> followed by James MacMillan's <i>Seven Last Words from the Cross</i> , wholly applicable to the Easter theme. What made this concert so memorable was the stunning performances given by both ensembles, but equally the use of light and image, projected onto the wall behind the performers. Visual artists James Houston and Angelica Kroeger collaborated with Cryptic director; Cathie Boyd to produce visual imagery that at every step, complimented the performances and the use of lit music stands, also synchronised through the lighting deck/rig created by Boyd demonstrated incredible creative awareness of how a performance can celebrate both facets of performance and image.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <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>	Exc	If performing works with a significant religious connotation, such as the MacMillan and Taverner that was so complimented by the secular, but celebratory Osborne, then the choral/vocal input not only needs to enhance the core ideal, but take it beyond the physical performance-Tenebrae is one of the very few internationally acclaimed vocal ensembles who can do that. With the Taverner featuring Jonathan Morton and the ensemble only, the juxtaposition of three such significant works worked perfectly. All three were again enhanced by Boyd's visual imagery. The relationship between all three organisations, first demonstrated at the City of London Festival, then at the EIF meant that the Glasgow and Perth audiences who received this programme to celebrate Easter week, were privileged indeed.
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <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> Education events – see <sup>1</sup> below for definition	Exc	The programme and associated web-sites from all three organisations were informative. The Osborne was written to compliment MacMillan's work utilising almost identical forces, but in his case secular, celebrating seven maritime cities (theme of the 2009 City of London Festival) Kirkwall, Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki and St Petersburg and the language of their host countries in a complex text. The MacMillan, whilst extremely challenging for the voice is now a work that seems to be at the core of the chamber ensemble repertoire, which is also true of the Taverner, but for all three works to receive such high quality performances says much about the quality of the performers.

<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	<b>Performers/tutors</b> <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>	Exc	It is difficult to fault any aspect of these performances, which is rare for any professional critique, but this was the case. The role that the SE artistic director played in also directing the MacMillan from the violin made this a performance feat of almost gargantuan proportions. The audience experience was unique.
Dance, Theatre	<b>Choreography/Use of choreography</b> <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>		
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>	Exc	<p>I have said enough about the performance itself, but what was also evident was the manner in which the audience was totally engaged and enthused by what they were both hearing and seeing unfold before them. This listener was both engaged and inspired and that seemed to be the general response of everyone.</p> <p>There was a wide range of ages reflected in the audience, which was encouraging and numbers also seemed to be healthy. The information available was extremely descriptive and helpful.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <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 produced by the participants?</li> <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>Glasgow City Halls is one of Scotland's most significant venues and located within the city centre within easy reach of all transport. The halls were refurbished recently and provide one of the best acoustics and listener/audience experiences.</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, including a desk devoted to the Scottish Ensemble.</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</li> </ul>	<p>Good as already stated.</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																
<p>produced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>																	
Ease of booking and payment	N/A																
<p>Timing of the event</p> <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>	Conventional-good timings for the audience.																
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <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>	Good																
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <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="571 965 1257 1487"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 965 823 1032"></th> <th data-bbox="828 965 916 1032">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="920 965 1163 1032"></th> <th data-bbox="1168 965 1257 1032">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1039 823 1133">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="828 1039 916 1133"></td> <td data-bbox="920 1039 1163 1133">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1168 1039 1257 1133">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1140 823 1211">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="828 1140 916 1211"></td> <td data-bbox="920 1140 1163 1211">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1168 1140 1257 1211">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1218 823 1487">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="828 1218 916 1487">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="920 1218 1163 1487">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1168 1218 1257 1487">Yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation		Audio description of performances	Yes	Captioning		Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	Yes
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<p>Customer service</p> <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, both from in house staff and representatives of the participating organisations.																

**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.