



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 National Jazz Orchestra
Venue:	Queen's Hall
Title of Event :	Loud Jazz and Electric Miles
Type of Event:	Music performance
Date of Visit:	05 March 2010
Overall Rating:	Very good
<i>(Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – ie 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>	
<p>This was a blistering performance by the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra and guest soloist John Scofield. There was a real buzz in the audience from start to finish and this seemed to be reflected in the band too. My only (minor) criticism would be that the inclusion of slightly more slower numbers would have balanced the programme better.</p>	
<p>This concert was typical of several performances I have seen by the SNJO – bringing international stars to Scotland to perform with what is now one of the best jazz big bands in the UK. I feel that more focus on marketing could have pulled a larger and broader audience to hear such a wonderful resource based in our country.</p>	
Name: Tamsin Mendelsohn	Date: 16 March 2010
Scottish Arts Council Officer	

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"> • Quality of ideas • if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Excellent	<p>This was a presentation of seminal jazz guitarist, John Scofield, performing his own and Miles Davis music, arranged for the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra (SNJO) by a collection of international composer/arrangers, including Scotland's Paul Harrison.</p> <p>It was extremely exciting to have an artist of Scofield's calibre performing in Scotland – plus the additional pull of playing the iconic music from Miles' electric period.</p>
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? • If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Very good	<p>The concert fitted well with the SNJO's commitment to performing big band music and arrangements from across the broad spectrum of jazz, both new and traditional, and bringing international guest stars to Scotland.</p> <p>Most of the arrangements seemed to be of fast, loud tunes. While this was indicative of Scofield's album <i>Loud Jazz</i>, the concert would have benefited from some slower, more reflective numbers to balance the programme and the sound levels in the Queen's Hall.</p> <p>The arrangements of Miles' music allowed for the kinds of long solos that he would have played, while still involving the full band.</p> <p>I am not sure that the arrangements completely captured the electric and 'spacey' vibe that some of the music from this period would have produced – this may have needed further consideration in the brief for the arrangers.</p>
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? • How well did it communicate the artistic themes? • How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	Very good	<p>Clearly matched the advertised programme, as conceived by Tommy Smith, who identified and commissioned the arrangers.</p> <p>A well-written programme outlined John Scofield's background and the music performed. John Scofield engaged the audience well by speaking about a number of the pieces and what it was like working with Miles Davis.</p>

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
All	Performers/tutors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. • How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? • In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Excellent	<p>The calibre of arrangers and arrangements was second to none - and the combination of this plus a solo guest of Scofield's calibre generated an electric performance from the SNJO.</p> <p>As guest artist, Scofield was the featured soloist in most of the pieces – however, solos and trading duos by Tommy Smith and a few of the other members of the band demonstrated the extremely high level of players within the orchestra, able to rise to the standard of the guest artist and meet the challenges of the music.</p> <p>Also particularly commendable were the rhythm section – bass, piano and drums – who kept the pace going throughout the performance.</p> <p>I did think that it was a missed opportunity that a trumpet player in the orchestra did not get a chance to solo in one of the Davis arrangements.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work original? • How was the space used? • How many dancers were there and how were they used? • How long was the piece? 		
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 		
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 		
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 		
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 		
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be 	Good-very good	<p>The audience was broad in age range, and there was clearly wide appeal to hear the music / soloist.</p> <p>The concert was free to under -16's – Tommy Smith asked for a show of hands – a good way to further advertise the scheme!</p> <p>There was not really any representation from broader cultures or disabled audience members.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>engaged/inspired?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • 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? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project? <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		<p>The audience response was very enthusiastic.</p> <p>The stalls and tables were almost completely sold out – I would estimate 200-240 attendances.</p> <p>As outlined above, there was a well-written programme. The website is currently being redesigned. The online advertising was a static notice.</p> <p>I felt that there was potential to expand the use of the website in order to draw more people into the music in advance, and therefore hopefully the concerts – for example by having programme notes online in advance, podcasts/videos of band members/guests and other links to information or videos of the guests, styles of music etc.</p> <p>It would have been interesting to have a pre or post show discussion to give an opportunity for audience members to ask questions to the soloist/selected band members.</p> <p>There were no BSL/captioned/audio descriptors – I am not sure how this would work with a music performance.</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"> • Is it easy to find? • Is it on a main transport route? • Are the spaces clean? • What were the sight lines like? • How big was it? 	<p>Queen's Hall is on a main public transport route with good signage and disabled access. Sight lines are usually good – pillar seats are generally avoided in box office sales – however, sitting to one or other side of the stalls can diminish the full band sound.</p>

Criteria	Comment																
Information/ interpretive material at venue— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	Lots of posters I received advance emails about this and other programmes for the week.																
Publicity/ pre-publicity – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? What publicity materials are produced? Is it easy to understand? Where can you get the information? Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	The List I was sent flyers in the post and e-mail alerts. SAC funding acknowledged on the website and programme																
Ease of booking and payment	Ticket booked online at the Queen's Hall and picked up on the night – very easy																
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	Started 8.30pm and finished around 10.45pm. Quite a few people left around 10.30pm – the start time was perhaps a bit too late.																
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	Yes Yes I did not notice Braille or audio loop signage																
Access and provision for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>N</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>N</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>Y</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td>Did not notice</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	N	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	Did not notice
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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.

Criteria	Comment
<p data-bbox="151 264 384 297">Customer service</p> <ul data-bbox="151 300 544 528" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="151 300 544 409">• How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)<li data-bbox="151 412 544 528">• If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?	<p data-bbox="571 264 708 297">Very good</p>

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.

If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.

I agree with Tamsin about the late starting time and after April 2010 all our concerts will begin at 8pm in Edinburgh. It's very important everyone gets value for money and hears the full show.

We are also initiating pre-concert talks, which are popular in the classical field, with 3 lined up already: March 28, Gateshead, September 17, Aberdeen, September 18, Inverness.

The jazz critics rated our Edinburgh concert:

**** [4 stars] Herald

***** [5 stars] Scotsman

267 tickets were sold

5 persons of disability attended

57 people were senior citizens

Repertoire: John Scofield and I carefully choose all the music to reflect the two periods. Arranger's brief basically outlines the soloist's strengths and weaknesses, the duration required, time line, and specific payments dates; it also reflects the SNJO musicians' strengths on an individual basis. i.e., Alto 1 (Clarinet, Soprano) Martin Kershaw (improviser: hardbop orientated), etc., Each composer decides to write selected improvisation passages for whom they choose. They also hear the main soloists through listening to Rhapsody in Blue Live CD and past performances of their work, which we send out on CD to them. They are never dictated to. They can choose to write slow tunes fast or fast tunes slow; it's really up to them. I personally think this is a problem when you have ten different composers, as they cannot judge the overall balance of a concert programme. In future, I think I will have to give more detailed briefs to the composers of whom they should write improvisation passages for in order to spread the true nature of jazz among the many great soloists in the orchestra, as well as determining tempo and dynamic ranges. N.B. Ryan Quigley [trumpet] was given a solo without the composer's consent but I felt we needed to add another player on that piece.

We did perform one ballad in the second half. The concert was advertised Loud Jazz and Electric Miles, which did forewarn the audience in advance of the concert's nature, although not all pieces were fast and loud. Other pieces like Splatch started p [softly], and Jean Pierre had sections with flute and soprano saxophones playing mp [medium soft]. Dynamics are noted in all arrangements and executed by the orchestra.

Tempos varied from 3 slow tempi, 3 medium tempi and 4 fast tempi.

bpm = 52

bpm = 72

bpm = 90

bpm = 120

bpm = 140

bpm = 170

bpm = 196

bpm = 200

bpm = 240

bpm = 252

Concerning the late period of Miles Davis' electric music, none of the arrangers chose to feature trumpet, it was simply their choice, although many of the arrangers used Miles' classic Harmon mute sound in the ensemble passages. Having supported Miles Davis in the late 80s with my group, I never saw him featured for any length of time – it was why he had so many great musicians in his band, so they could improvise at length. I can only assume the arrangers found focusing on the trumpet too clichéd to include in their writing.

When the SNJO presented the music of the great saxophonist Wayne Shorter, we did not feature a major saxophonist as guest - we presented vibist Gary Burton. It was the compositions that were important, not the instrumentation. But the balance of the programme, in this case, was excellent, in the general sense of having light, shade, fast, slow, up, down, dark, light, etc., because we were not adhering to a finite stylistic period.

If we post programmes online before the concerts then we are, of course, unable to sell them at concerts but maybe we can build this into our budget and allow for the programmes to be used as a marketing tool as Tamsin suggested.

Many thanks for allowing us to respond.

Tommy Smith
Artistic Director

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Website: The new SNJO website is currently under construction and it is SNJO's intention to utilise it to engage with audiences through digital marketing and multi-channel communications opportunities. We also use SNJO's Facebook page to market the concerts and engage with our audience. For these concerts with a clip of John Scofield playing with Miles Davis, concert details, preview article written in The List. We also posted a review of the concert and pics of the orchestra and John Scofield on Flickr after the concerts. We would dearly like to do podcasts and will begin work on this soon. There are also licenses to be purchased if we use copyrighted material in the podcasts.

Marketing of concerts: A full mailout to the SNJO mailing list, posters and leaflets in Edinburgh distributed by EAE. Preview articles/listings in The Scotsman, The List, Visit Scotland, BBC Radio Scotland, Edinburgh University Radio, etc.

Unlike the rest of the Scottish Orchestras the SNJO unfortunately do not have the budgets to allow expanding the marketing activity to advertising in press and radio or street posters. It is therefore imperative that we utilise future budgets to build up the database through soliciting for names/contacts at Scottish jazz festivals and large jazz concerts as outlined in the marketing plan. This will have a negative impact on the number of posters and leaflets that can be distributed but over time will benefit the orchestras attendances. Ideally we would increase the level of marketing expenditure on all concerts to pull a broader and wider audience but this increase in expenditure is not possible within the current and future marketing budgets.

The SNJO undertook an audience survey during this series of concerts which was distributed at the concert along with:

- a. Leaflets promoting the next series of concerts
- b. 'Join the mailing list', postcards
- c. 'Friends of The SNJO', leaflets.

Budgets do not allow for large print publicity materials or braille at this stage.

Members of the team also engaged with the audience regarding mailing list, survey, next concerts and joining friends of the SNJO.

new comment: 3 of the completed audience survey questions out of around 30 completed surveys from the QH indicated that this was the first jazz concert they had attended. I also thought the audience although predominantly over 40 did have many adults in the 20-40 age group.

Anne Watson & Paul Gillon