



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: Shetland Arts

Venue: various in Shetland

Title of Event: Fiddle Frenzy 2008

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc) **Festival 4-10th Aug**

Date of Visit: 4-6th August 2008

Name : Marie Fielding Specialist Advisor

Overall Rating: 5

(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.)

Fiddle Frenzy is an exciting and unique opportunity to experience an intimate musical and cultural festival in Shetland. Mainly by word of mouth, a strong team of organisers and utilising local talent, this festival, in its 5th year, is definitely one of the best. A warm welcome and personal touch to each individual was evident. Professional tutoring for fiddle and guitar and performances of a high standard as well as excursions, story telling, informal sessions and one to one sessions were available. Scholarships are also available (5) encouraging local prize- winners, up and coming talent and children from Orkney. It is vital that tutors continue developing their own style of teaching and with support, make their own decisions regarding methods, music, tunes etc. There was a great awareness of team effort, communication and in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. In my opinion, Fiddle Frenzy provides a high quality service.

Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please circle the relevant title

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. | 5 | The choices available were really excellent. Self-assessment at the beginning of the week worked well. Having seen the tutors/performers before, I was impressed with the standard of professionalism and enthusiasm from all concerned. They have matured and are very committed to their field of expertise. A handbook was given to tutors as a guide. |
| 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. | 5 | The workshops are perhaps the vital part of the festival, as participants want to learn new tunes as well as hear their tutor play and build up a relationship with them. The concert is a showcase of local talent as well as income and cd sales. The ceilidh is fun and a chance to relax and get to know the committee and learn a few dances too. Anyone interested in sightseeing could take advantage of this every day with planned trips. A final concert offered participants the chance to perform new tunes, as a group. |
| 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 | 5 | A highly successful festival, which is well organised and has something for everyone, from complete beginners to the more advanced player. The “overseeing” tutor is a great idea and was available at all times to offer advice and help out in classes if need be. Events and venues manager was approachable and hands on throughout day and night. |
| 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 | Tutors were patient, communicated well and had planned in advance. Praise was often used and individual time was given, out with class times. Tunes were demonstrated well and tutors were flexible and understanding. Some have qualifications. It would be helpful at times to move around the classes, particularly in large rooms and not sit at all times. This would create a more intimate and inclusive approach as well as allowing the tutor to see/hear more efficiently. |
| 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. | | |

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, 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 | Lighting and sound were excellent at the concert and dance, which really added to the atmosphere. Traditional fiddle music in Shetland is world famous. The groups altered in size on day one and then settled down. Adults and children. I would recommend that class sizes do not exceed around 20, although this is difficult to do if the demand is there for a particular tutor. One –one sessions were available to book. More able players could be challenged further with technique such as bowing, ornamentation and harmonies as a follow up to the tune. It is vital where two tutors are in one class that one method of teaching is used only, to avoid confusion or conflict. Having an extra help on hand however is good especially in the beginners class. |
| 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> | | Information was sent out prior to the festival. This is vital, giving time for questions and planning ahead. There was also a welcoming/registration on arrival, setting the scene for the week and introducing key workers. The participants all grasped the tunes and seemed to be enjoying themselves. All classes were well attended and I didn't see anyone leave early! Numbers varied from around 6 to over 30. Questions were answered well and the enthusiasm of the participants was clearly carried on into the evening, as sessions were popular. It was particularly nice to see young people encouraged as tutors and learners at the festival, some of whom brought their families to have a holiday. |
| 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. | 5 | As well as workshops, there were story telling events, competitions, talks, concerts, cookery, late sessions, and Final Fling. Music for the Saturday performance (optional) was sent out in advance, however, only helpful if you can read. Time was allocated for rehearsals. A music book developed by YMI was available at only £5, really great to see this. All activities were suitable for all ages and stages. |
| All | Outcomes of education activity – what learning/skills development took place? What did participants take away with them? Are education resources | 5 | The focus was on learning Shetland tunes. Music was given at the end of the week to everyone, as learning by ear was clearly stated in the info pack. This was flexible, as some were uncomfortable |

| Artform | Criteria | Rating | Comments and key reasons for rating |
|---------|--|--------|--|
| | being provided for follow up work? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum (formal or informal)? | | without the sheet music and others wanted the music after the class, not at the end of the week. Feedback sheets and ongoing assessment with the organisers and tutors helped keep everyone happy. |

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 | The Garrison Theatre is a lovely intimate setting. The Islesburgh is open to the community with a large reception area and various rooms upstairs, which are ideal. |
| Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc. | All participants were issued with an info pack as well as a name tag. All information was available at all times, in the office area. Although I did not see a programme for the concert, posters were in place. |
| 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. | The web site is informative, easy to access and has contacts and downloads. It is easy to understand and includes quotes from previous festivals, adding a personal touch. Although Shetland Arts want to keep the festival relatively small, advertising is good and posters were available in the town centre. |
| Ease of booking and payment | Very easy to do, by email, phone or post. |
| Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? | The venues are all well known to locals, and within walking distance in the town centre. Taxis and buses are available. Perhaps more local signs would help visitors. |
| External signage and signposting | The venues have their own external signs. |
| Internal directional signage | Venues had good signage as well as Fiddle Frenzy adding their own posters and signs during the week, as the festival developed. |
| Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see? | Access for disabled people included parking, lifts and toilets which were clearly signed. |
| Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? | All events started and finished on time, as well as allowing for flexibility when required, especially at workshops. Breaks for tutors were adequate and intervals at concerts were sufficient. |
| Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) | Very efficient box office service as well as friendly catering. Fiddle Frenzy staff on hand at all times at every venue. |
| Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ² | Logo appears on web site and on all brochures. |

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.