



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:	Hebrides Ensemble
Venue:	St Magnus Cathedral
Title of Event:	St Magnus Festival
Type of Event:	<i>(e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)</i> Concert
Date of Visit:	23 June 2008
Overall Rating:	4/5

(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.)

Excellent playing by the ensemble with the highlight being the juxtaposition of Messiaen with Maxwell Davies. His commission in memory of the young Orkadian woman so tragically killed in New Zealand was a personal highlight of the entire festival.

Name: Ian Smith Date: 11/08/2008

Specialist Advisor **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 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 Hebrides Ensemble is growing in stature as one of Scotland's leading chamber music groups and this programme was both challenging and innovative in its choice of repertoire.
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	Two Messiaen pieces featured members of the ensemble; Alison Mitchell (flute) in <i>Le Merle Noir</i> and Alexander Janiczek (Vln) with Philip Moore (Pno) in his Theme and Variations for Violin and Piano. In between Messiaen was Maxwell Davies' string trio dedicated to the young Orkadian woman; Karen Aim tragically killed in New Zealand. The programme ended with the chamber version (realised by Edward Harper) of Mahler's Kindertotenlieder with Louise Mott (mezzo soprano). This worked less well.
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	I felt that both Messiaen pieces and the Maxwell Davies worked very well and were beautifully performed by the ensemble. I enjoyed the Mahler too, but am unsure whether it works in this setting, but that may be partly due to my knowing the full-scale orchestral version so well, for which it was conceived. The mezzo-soprano took some movements to sound fully assured and confident.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	5	As above, the performances were of very high quality. This was especially evident in the contemporary works with exceptional playing from Alexander Janiczek throughout.
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.		
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.		
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>	5	I thought the chosen programme worked well overall and was very well performed. The ensemble playing was exemplary throughout.
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>		This early day concert at 1pm was very well attended and the audience showed the warmth of their appreciation to the performers.
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	Good programme notes.
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>		N/A, although the ensemble were engaged in master-class activities.

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	St Magnus Cathedral is not a concert venue but works well for smaller scale acoustic programmes like this one.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Good.
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.	Web and programme but no on-line ticket sales.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easy to locate.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Facilities for disabled people were obvious.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	1pm concert and well attended.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent volunteer staff.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Programme and website.

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.