



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:	Ilya Gringolts/Alexander Madzar
Venue:	Stromness Town Hall
Title of Event:	St Magnus Festival
Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	Concert/Recital
Date of Visit:	22 June 2008
Overall Rating:	4
<i>(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.)</i>	
An intimate and challenging recital programme performed in Stromness Town Hall to a packed audience. A very successful event.	
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.	4	The programme was well-conceived placing two Beethoven violin sonatas around a contemporary work; a joint commission for the St Magnus and Cheltenham festivals from Peter Maxwell Davies with the third Schuman sonata.
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.	4	The use of the intimate Stromness Town Hall as a venue is one of the features of this event and the audience were treated to some beautiful playing, in particular from the pianist; Alexander Madzar. His playing in the Maxwell Davies piece was extraordinary – attested to by the composer himself at the performance. The Schumann was also an inspired choice.
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 recital brought together two eminent performers who demonstrated a real understanding between soloist and accompanist that was evident throughout the programme.
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	The performance was of an extremely high quality, unsurprising when utilising performers who are renowned world-wide – another successful element of this festival. I was a little surprised that in the Maxwell Davies, in particular, the pianist used the short peg for the piano lid, where more sonority would have created a better balance.
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>	3/4	It is always a mystery to this assessor why performers like this are so poor at communicating with their audience verbally. The audience warmed to them from the outset, but largely because of the travelling misfortunes affecting the pianist due to the recent combination of weather and airport closures.
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>		The audience was extremely responsive and encouraging to the performers and unsurprisingly for such a small venue was absolutely packed.
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.	4	The programme, much improved this year, was informative and provided sufficient detail.
All	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)?		N/A

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	Intimate and so well-suited to this type of concert.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programme notes were informative.
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.	An easily navigable website, but tickets for such a significant event as this must be available on line.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Very easy to find.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Not really necessary.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	I suspect the venue is not fully DDA compliant, but ramps were in place.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	2.30pm start and well scheduled within the overall festival programme.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Extremely helpful and efficient volunteer staff, who are the hallmark of this event.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	In all promotional material and on the 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.

Online booking: we appreciate the need to offer online booking for all our events and are actively working towards this. The most practical and cost-effective solution for the Festival is likely to be a system linked to that of the Pickaquoy Centre, who are in the process of developing a new online booking system. Though the work on this is ongoing, it seems unlikely that online booking for the Festival can be achieved before 2009. It should definitely be in place before the 2010 Festival.