



### 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.

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>Nash Ensemble</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>St Magnus Cathedral</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>St Magnus Festival</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b> (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	<b>Concert</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>22 June 2008</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>5</b>
<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>	
This concert performance was really hard to fault and was a perfect example of why St Magnus Festival is such an attractive event for lovers and equally performers of great music, contemporary and classical.	
Name: Ian Smith	Date: 11/08/2008
Specialist Advisor	<b>Scottish Arts Council Officer</b>

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 Nash Ensemble have been regular visitors to this festival over many years and this performance was one of their very best, both in its inherent quality and in the choice of repertoire. Two 'monsters' of the string quartet repertoire; the first Beethoven and Mendelssohn's A Minor quartet, written when the composer was only 18. In between was the Horn Quintet of James MacMillan, written in 2007 for the Cheltenham Festival and Maxwell Davies' work for solo horn; Sea Eagle, performed by its dedicatee, Richard Watkins.
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	An innovative programming choice sandwiching two totally different contemporary works featuring the hornist Richard Watkins with two traditional and classical string quartets.
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 <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	5	As above (both), the St Magnus Festival has a well-merited reputation for scheduling new and contemporary work alongside masterpieces of the classically influenced repertoire.
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	It is difficult to believe that we were not listening to the performance of a professional string quartet who work together all the time. The four members of the Nash who make up this quartet; Marianne Thorsen and Malin Broman (Vlins), Lawrence Power (Vla) and Paul Watkins (Cello) are such brilliant performers and were led in an exemplary manner always by Marianne Thorsen. Inspirational playing 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.		

<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
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><b>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</b></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	These performers always engaged with the audience and presented the programme with grace and ease.
All	<p><b>Audience</b></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>		St Magnus Cathedral is the core venue for this event and whilst not the perfect venue, especially regarding sight lines, until Orkney has a dedicated performance space, it will continue to be the central venue for the festival. The audience for this concert (sold out) were appreciative and warm to the brilliant performers they witnessed.
All	<p><b>Additional Interpretative activity</b> – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.</p>		N/A
All	<p><b>Outcomes of education activity</b> – 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>		The performance and its quality was an education to all who attended.

## 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	As above, St Magnus Cathedral is not and was never intended to be a concert venue, but works well for the festival.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Quality programme, plus good information on the website.
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-based predominantly, although ticket sales must now be 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?	In the centre of Kirkwall.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Ramps are in place and disabled toilet facilities are available inside the cathedral.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Evening concert at 7.30pm.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent attention as always from the volunteer staff.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Good on all literature and on the website.

<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.

**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.