



**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.**

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>St Magnus Festival</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>MagFest Spiegeltent</b>
<b>Title of Event :</b>	<b>Lisa Milne sings Jacques Brel</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>Festival concert (as part of MagFest)</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>21 June 2009</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<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>	

This was a well executed and appealing concert, which added a unique flavour to the overall festival programme.

Name: Clare Hewitt

Date: 25 August 2009

Scottish Arts Council Officer

~~Specialist Advisor~~

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	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of ideas</li> <li>if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons</li> </ul>	Excellent	<p>Lisa Milne is primarily an opera singer, but her musical skills and tastes extend beyond that genre. The programme of music by Jacques Brel had the feeling of a 'cabaret-recital', which worked very well in the setting of the Speigeltent and within the broader classical programme of the Festival.</p> <p>Milne chose a range of Brel songs to perform, including some of his best-known works.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation?</li> <li>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</li> </ul>	Excellent	<p>Milne performed a similar type of programme (of Janis Joplin's songs), which was widely acclaimed, at the 2007 St Magnus Festival. Bringing her back to the Festival for a Brel recital continues the Festival's commitment to presenting an interesting and eclectic high quality programme.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material?</li> <li>How well did it communicate the artistic themes?</li> <li>How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	Very Good	<p>The artistic themes of the programme were well communicated, and the performance was a success in itself and within the wider Festival programme.</p> <p>At times, Milne could have made more of the atmosphere and 'uncompromising' (as it is described in the programme notes) nature of the works being performed by building her audience 'chat' around the mood of the songs – once or twice the build-up to hearing a particular song (<i>Ne Me Quitte Pas</i>, for example) was lost by the telling of a humorous anecdote, which somewhat deflated the mood of the song itself.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments.</li> <li>How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience?</li> <li>In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>	Excellent	<p>Both Milne and her accompanist, Richard Peirson, gave excellent performances, and both were able to engage with the audience very successfully.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the work original?</li> <li>How was the space used?</li> <li>How many dancers were there and how were they used?</li> <li>How long was the piece?</li> </ul>		

<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	<b>Script</b> Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new work</li> <li>• second productions</li> <li>• classics where the original has been substantially changed</li> </ul>		
Theatre, Dance	<b>Direction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the work well interpreted?</li> <li>• Was it well cast?</li> <li>• Was it well presented?</li> </ul>		
Dance, Theatre	<b>Use of music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>• Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>		
Dance, Theatre	<b>Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were the costumes, set and lighting?</li> <li>• How did it work in the venue?</li> <li>• Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>		
All	<b>Quality of Public Engagement</b> Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience?</li> <li>• Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants?</li> <li>• Were you/ engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• What was their response?</li> <li>• Approximately how many people were there?</li> <li>• Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled?</li> <li>• Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many?</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Were these targeted at specific age groups?</li> </ul> Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred?</li> <li>• What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix?</li> <li>• Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning &amp; Development</li> <li>• What learning/skills development took place?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the art</li> </ul>	Excellent	The intimate atmosphere of the Speigeltent was a perfect setting for this programme, and the performers interacted with the audience in both music and speech.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>produced by the participants?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project?</li> <li>• How were participants recruited?</li> <li>• Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</li> </ul> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</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"> <li>• Is it easy to find?</li> <li>• Is it on a main transport route?</li> <li>• Are the spaces clean?</li> <li>• What were the sight lines like?</li> <li>• How big was it?</li> </ul>	<p>The venue was easy enough to find by means of the map in the souvenir brochure, and by following other festival-goers.</p> <p>The architecture of the Speigeltent (pillars between peripheral ring of seats and the floor / stage area) could have caused sight-line problems, but the mirrors on the pillars prevented that as one was able to see the performance in the reflective glass.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event?</li> <li>• Is there information on the venue's website?</li> </ul>	<p>The souvenir brochure offered the most comprehensive information about the programme, with brief information available in the free festival brochure and on the website.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in?</li> <li>• What publicity materials are produced?</li> <li>• Is it easy to understand?</li> <li>• Where can you get the information?</li> <li>• Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>?</li> </ul> <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>The St Magnus Festival had a visible presence in Edinburgh in the months leading up to the festival, in the form of its marketing (flyers and brochures). The website is comprehensive, if a little stilted-looking. Navigating between pages of information isn't always flowing, but it does what is required.</p> <p>Funding from the Scottish Arts Council is acknowledged in printed material, but I could not find any mention of funders on the website, which needs to be addressed in some way by the Festival.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>The festival office was very helpful and efficient in ensuring that I had the tickets and bookings I required for my visit.</p>

<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.

Criteria	Comment																
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?</li> <li>• Was the length appropriate?</li> </ul>	<p>The performance was due to begin at 10:15 pm but started and ended slightly late. However, this was not a real problem due to the cabaret club feel of the event.</p> <p>Running times for performances are stated in the small and souvenir brochures, allowing visitors to plan their festival activities easily.</p>																
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the entrance clearly marked?</li> <li>• Is there clear internal directional signage?</li> <li>• Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops?</li> </ul>	<p>Although the Speigeltent is slightly off-road, its presence and entrance are very visible.</p>																
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event</li> </ul> <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue?</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="566 633 823 701"></th> <th data-bbox="828 633 916 701">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="920 633 1161 701"></th> <th data-bbox="1166 633 1254 701">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="566 707 823 801">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="828 707 916 801">No</td> <td data-bbox="920 707 1161 801">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1166 707 1254 801">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="566 808 823 880">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="828 808 916 880">No</td> <td data-bbox="920 808 1161 880">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1166 808 1254 880">?</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="566 887 823 1151">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="828 887 916 1151">?</td> <td data-bbox="920 887 1161 1151">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1166 887 1254 1151">No</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No	Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	?	Accessible toilets	?	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	No
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<p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)</li> <li>• If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?</li> </ul>	<p>The Festival's customer service, both at the box office and front of house, was 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.

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.