



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.**

Artist/Company:	St Magnus Festival
Venue:	Pickaquoy Centre, Kirkwall
Title of Event :	Royal Scottish National Orchestra (Event 11)
Type of Event:	Festival concert
Date of Visit:	20 June 2009
Overall Rating:	Very Good
<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 concert which showcased the full forces available to the St Magnus Festival.	
Name: Clare Hewitt	Date: 12 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"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Very Good	The programme was a very good balance between well-known and much-loved pieces (Sibelius <i>Finlandia</i> and Vaughan Williams <i>A Sea Symphony</i>) and new work (Beamish's <i>The Singing</i> , first performed in 2006).
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Very Good	Programming the massed choir (consisting of the visiting Huddersfield Choral Society and St Magnus Festival Chorus) with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (their first festival residency) and the visiting soloists used the resources available to the festival to very good effect.
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	Excellent	<p>By featuring the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in the 2009 programme, the festival aimed to deliver 'three marvellously varied programmes under three impressive conductors' by bringing together world-class soloists with the orchestra and its visiting maestros. The three RSNO concerts, of which I saw two, did indeed offer varied programmes, and the guest conductors and soloists added a different flavour to each of the performances.</p> <p>This year's festival theme of lighthouses was alluded to in this concert by the <i>Sea Symphony</i>.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Very Good	The orchestra performed to a high standard, as did the soloists (despite Peter Sidhom's obvious discomfort due to a leg injury) and the choirs (although a few of the most prominent high-register moments in the Vaughan Williams were a little 'splashy' in intonation). James Crabb's performance was particularly intense and arresting.
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the work original? How was the space used? How many dancers were there and how were they used? How long was the piece? 		
Theatre	<p>Script</p> <p>Please comment on this for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new work second productions 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 		
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 		
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 		
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • 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? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the 	Very Good	The Pickaquoy Centre was full, and the audience appeared to be fully engaged with the performance. The notes to the performance in the festival's souvenir brochure were excellent and illuminating, and included a very good composer's note from Beamish, as well as the words for the Vaughan Williams.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	structure and content of the project? Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?		

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
Location and suitability of the venue for the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? Are the spaces clean? What were the sight lines like? How big was it? 	The Pickaquoy Centre was suitable in terms of its size and being able to accommodate both a large audience and mass of performers. However, the fact that it is a sports hall detracts from the ambience in terms of lighting, and is not always complimentary in terms of acoustics.
Information/ interpretive material at venue— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	The souvenir brochure offered the most comprehensive information about the programme, with brief information available in the free festival brochure and on the website.
Publicity/ pre-publicity – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? What publicity materials are produced? Is it easy to understand? Where can you get the information? Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <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>
Ease of booking and payment	The festival office was very helpful and efficient in ensuring that I had the tickets and bookings I required for my visit.
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	The event was an appropriate length, and began and ended on time. Running times for performances are stated in the small and souvenir brochures, allowing visitors to plan their festival activities easily.
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or 	Signage was good, and staff were present to direct concert-goers to the venue and their seats.

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.

Criteria	Comment																			
signage for audio loops?																				
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="568 226 823 293"></th> <th data-bbox="823 226 916 293">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="916 226 1163 293"></th> <th data-bbox="1163 226 1256 293">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="568 293 823 394">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="823 293 916 394">No</td> <td data-bbox="916 293 1163 394">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1163 293 1256 394">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="568 394 823 472">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="823 394 916 472">No</td> <td data-bbox="916 394 1163 472">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1163 394 1256 472">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="568 472 823 745">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="823 472 916 745">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="916 472 1163 745">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1163 472 1256 745">No</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No	Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	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"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	<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.