



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:	Kreisler Ensemble
Venue:	St Magnus Cathedral
Title of Event:	Commedia in the Cathedral
Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	Concert performance
Date of Visit:	Saturday 24 June 2007
Overall Rating:	5
<p>(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.)</p>	
<p>Excellent This was an arresting concert on the first full day of the festival during a prime lunchtime slot. This was a great benchmark for the rest of the festival by a bold and ambitious young group who demonstrated no fear with innovative programming, matched by their performance skills.</p>	
Name: Tamsin Mendelsohn	Date: 17 October 2007
Specialist Advisor	Scottish Arts Council Officer <i>Please circle the relevant title</i>

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	<p>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.</p>	5	<p>This was a performance by a young London-based group – Kreisler Ensemble plus solo soprano Natalie Raybould.</p> <p>This was an extremely engaging and exciting concert, featuring young artists in an ambitiously conceived programme.</p> <p>The group aims to combine a sense of drama with the (mainly contemporary and commissioned) chamber music it performs and thereby build new audiences. This concert (as outlined by the conductor Matilda Hofman) was bound by themes of a <i>'bitter sweet, Pierrot-like mixture'</i>.</p> <p>The programme was an impressive range of contemporary works by Sally Beamish, Peter Maxwell Davies and young composers Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Iain Farrington (also pianist in the band).</p> <p>The music was very varied - jazz and blues inflections in <i>Three Songs for a Lady</i>- early and contemporary styles mixed in <i>Fantasia and Two Pavans</i> and use of old English language in <i>The Glory Tree</i>.</p> <p>The sense of drama, including humour at times was excellently conveyed through the singers' use of costume, use of hand-written signs – as well as through the general execution of the music.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	5	<p>This was part of the St Magnus Festival programme, which typically features high quality, contemporary chamber music.</p> <p>This performance fitted in very comfortably with the rest of the programme and performed on the first full day of the festival, set a high benchmark for quality and ambition.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	5	<p>The performance definitely had a strong dramatic edge in which 'outrageous' wit, theatre and high drama were brilliantly delivered through the skill of these young performers.</p>

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
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	5	<p>The choice of programme by the group was well balanced and performed. The opening piece was also composed by the group's pianist – Iain Farrington.</p> <p>Nathalie was a key feature of the programme, consistently striking in her ability to perform and communicate contemporary music, making it engaging and accessible. She demonstrated an impressively wide vocal range and ability to sing in a range of languages – including old English. She particularly contributed to the dramatic element of the performance and was able to evoke a range of feeling and atmosphere in the range of pieces, alongside the use of costumes – a striking pink dress, little black dress + feather boa – dancing, facial expression and general bravado.</p> <p>The performers were all of a high standard, and coupled with the excellent choice of programme and guest soprano, the whole experience was of the highest quality.</p>
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.		
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>The piece was performed in St Magnus Cathedral. This is a very large space in which audience members sit the whole way down the nave. At the back it can be difficult to see the performers, although the acoustic is excellent so the sound can be heard at any point in the building.</p> <p>It seemed that the audience were able to catch onto the simple but effective dramatic techniques.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.		
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 venue seemed full to capacity at this prime time Saturday lunchtime concert. The performance was extremely well received.
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>		N/A
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

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	This is a key venue, lending its name to the St Magnus Festival. It is able to seat a large number of people and the acoustics are excellent. Sightlines are not always perfect due to pillars and the distance from the back of the nave to the stage. However, there is always a good atmosphere.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	The programme was outlined in the main St Magnus Festival Programme. The information was informative about the programme and composers. However, the overall layout for the programme was not easy to follow – see general assessment for the festival.
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.	This was part of the overall St Magnus Festival publicity - see general assessment for the festival.
Ease of booking and payment	This was part of the overall St Magnus Festival publicity - see general assessment for the festival.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	This is a key venue in the centre of Kirkwall – it can be seen for miles around and the front door is easy to see.
External signage and signposting	This is very clear.
Internal directional signage	Seats and rows are numbered – I did not really see any other signage.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	There are some small steps up to the cathedra – I forgot to check for wheelchair access into the cathedral. I did not see any toilet or disabled toilet provision in the cathedral. I could not find information on-line regarding access needs.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The running time of 1hr 10mins was a good length time for a lunchtime concert and festival concert. As several audience members will be seeing lots of concerts this any longer is too long and can be disruptive in getting to other performances. The concert ran to time.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office,	Very helpful volunteer ushers.

Criteria	Comment
front of house, bar and/or catering)	
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	On all programme material.

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.

Disabled access and toilets are available in the Cathedral and signage is permanently installed.

Online information re access: we ask festival-goers to contact us reading any particular needs. Since venues are not always purpose-built and may vary from year to year, this seems reasonable.