



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: St Magnus Festival

Venue: King Street Halls

Title of Event: Lisa Sings Janis

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)

Festival concert performance

Date of Visit: Sunday 24 June 2007

Overall Rating: 5

(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.)

Excellent

This was a good quality and good fun programme. The 'blues-rock' music was very well performed by artists that have made their actual professions in the classical world. The overall presentation was informative and highly entertaining within the festival programme – thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Name: Tamsin Mendelsohn Date: 17 October 2007

~~Specialist Adviser~~

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please circle the relevant title

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	<p>This was a totally new experience of the renowned classical soprano – Lisa Milne. Billed as <i>Lisa Milne lets out her inner rock chick in the songs of one of her vocal heroines, the blues legend Janis Joplin</i> – this was delivered in partnership with members of Concerto Caladonia – also more known for their classical presentation.</p> <p>The programme presented a selection of Janis' best known songs, and in between numbers Lisa (apparently) enjoyed some of Janis' best loved tippie too – whisky!</p> <p>Although performed in a sit-down classical concert format, an appropriately informal atmosphere was created through relaxed dress and Lisa's 'banter' between songs.</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>I believe that the programme was originally conceived by Lisa Milne and had already been performed in London. The performance was part of the main St Magnus Festival – as opposed to the club where music from other genres are regularly presented.</p> <p>I experienced the concert as a very fresh and complimentary event to the overall festival - I think that the idea particularly worked in this case, as Lisa Milne is a known and trusted artist. It was a real pleasure to get an idea of other musical interests of such a well-known performer.</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 programme certainly delivered according to the concert aims of featuring Lisa singing blues-rock music.</p> <p>N/A</p>
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>While all professional artists from the classical scene, all of the performers were all excellent at performing in this style.</p> <p>Lisa Milne was clearly passionate about the music, knew the songs extremely well and was adept at entertaining the audience with information about Janis Joplin, the music and laughing at the concept of a classical soprano singing this music. She had no difficulty in persuading the audience to sing along with the encore number – <i>Mercedes Benz</i>.</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
			<p>David McGuinness of Concerto Caladonia provided fantastic piano accompaniment, along with guests from the band and BBC SSO trumpeter Mark O'Keefe.</p> <p>A small point that struck me was while Lisa does not technically need to use a microphone, it may have been useful for the quieter moments of songs to allow her to relax more into her own interpretations and leave recordings behind.</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>Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>	4	As outlined, a suitably informal atmosphere was created, although considering the style of music perhaps dimmed lights and some stage lighting would have been more authentic. This is only a minor point.
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'</p>		<p>This event was sold out to a wide audience range – some people I had definitely not seen at other festival events.</p> <p>Perhaps like me many people had booked out of curiosity – certainly everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy the performance.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>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>		
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>	4	<p>This was not needed, but as outlined, Lisa gave regular informative and entertaining comments about Janis Joplin, the music and her own experience of learning the music.</p>
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	I believe the capacity of the venue was 150-200 people. This made it suitable for an intimate and non-amplified performance with Lisa.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	A short programme leaflet was set out on the chairs – a good colourful design with basic information on Lisa and titles of songs.
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 wider St Magnus Festival programme – see general festival assessment.
Ease of booking and payment	See general festival assessment.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	The venue was quite tricky to find – I followed the queue of people to the door. The map in the St Magnus programme was quite difficult to follow and there was not very clear external signage.
External signage and signposting	Some bright sandwich boarding or banners would have been helpful to find the venue.
Internal directional signage	Very clear – signs for toilets.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Ramp into building, lift upstairs and access to toilets. See general comment in overall festival assessment
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	10.30pm was a suitable time to suit the music and seemed to suit the wide range of audience who attended.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very helpful ushering staff.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	This was on all main festival programme and publicity but on the concert leaflet.

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.