



### 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>Alan Barnes Quintet with Liz Fletcher and Alan Plater</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Spiegeltent</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Songs for Unsung Heroes</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b> (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	<b>Concert performance</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>Sunday 24 June 2007</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>3</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>	
<b>Name:</b> Tamsin Mendelsohn	<b>Date:</b> 17 October 2007
<b>Specialist Adviser:</b>	<b>Scottish Arts Council Officer</b> <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>	3	<p>This was a presentation of songs created by Alan Barnes and Alan Plater billed as <i>'their tribute to people, places, and institutions usually ignored by song-writers; including Spike Milligan, Slim Galliard, RAC route maps and men who don't wash as often as they should'</i>.</p> <p>A collaboration between Alan Barnes and Alan Plater was an exciting prospect, particularly within a predominantly classical music festival – however, I personally did not find the bill above particularly inspiring.</p> <p>The performance was well-played, but I did not feel was anything exceptional – bearing in mind the high standing as artists at the forefront of developments in their respective artforms.</p> <p>In general I found the material to be fairly 'jazz' nerdy – perhaps there is a good reason that song writers have not otherwise tackled topics such as swapping music collections from vinyl to CD – and I was not sure how Orkney audiences would receive a song about traffic jams on the M25!</p> <p>The one exception was a beautifully crafted song in waltz-time about Orkney, using the unusual place names to pay tribute to the island with the 'ring of stone'.</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>	3	<p>This performance was part of a series of multi-artform events programmed for an offshoot of the festival – Magfest – which this year was held in one of the infamous spiegel tents – and aims to draw wider (local) audiences into the festival.</p> <p>I do not believe that jazz has featured much or at all in the festival programme, outwith the festival club. This show has toured before and was presumably chosen as a light and accessible option for a non-jazz audience. In this respect it was a potentially good option, but I feel did not match the ambition of the overall festival programme.</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 <sup>1</sup>below for guidance</p>	3	As above.

<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
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>	3-4	<p>All musicians performed well - Alan Barnes is highly regarded within the UK jazz community - and regularly talked to the audience to introduce the songs.</p> <p>While this was a relaxing event, I felt that musically it was under ambitious and did not allow the audience to see the real talent of the artists involved.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc</p>		
Theatre	<p>Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.</p>		
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.</p>		
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.</p>		
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.</p>		
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	<p>This was presented in the atmospheric space of the Spiegeltent, appropriate for a light jazz performance. Lighting was dimmed and audience members were able to buy and sit with drinks throughout the performance.</p>
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</p>		<p>The event was well attended and despite my own reservations, the audience seemed appreciative of the event.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	visitors/ participants at the time of visit  Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc		
All	<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.		N/A
All	<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)?		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 was a great venue for this kind of performance – very relaxing and small enough to have an intimate rapport with the musicians on stage.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	None was really needed, and the band did a good job of introducing the musical material.
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.	As part of the St Magnus overall publicity – see general assessment – with a separate area of the website dedicated to MagFest.
Ease of booking and payment	No problem through the St Magnus Booking Hotline - see general festival assessment
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	This was easy to find along the main street.
External signage and signposting	Entrance was obvious and didn't need signage.
Internal directional signage	None was needed, although I did not notice any toilets.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Ramp up to main entrance – as above, I did not see any disabled toilets.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	10.30pm for one hour was a good time and length for a relaxing evening performance of jazz – something a bit different at the end of the day from the main festival.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very helpful ushers.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	On all publicity and main festival programmes.

<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.

**There were toilets - immediately opposite the Spiegeltent entrance, and a disabled toilet provision was available.**

**We have included jazz in previous programmes, e.g. Tommy Smith, SNJO, and this is a genre we would like to develop. The Alan Plater/Alan Barnes collaboration was appropriate since Alan Plater was a featured artist at the 2007 Festival. The Alan Barnes Quintet also performed at the Festival Club, where they were hugely popular, and gave a lunchtime performance to which we invited groups of secondary school pupils. We feel it was a successful Festival residency and was an important element in developing a new audience for the Festival.**