



### 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:** Tolbooth, Stirling

**Venue:** Tolbooth

**Title of Event:** Le Weekend 2007

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

Festival of innovative and experimental music and sound

**Date of Visit:** 26 May 2007

**Overall Rating:** 4

*(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.)*

A thoroughly enjoyable evening creating a mind and ear opening experience – including adventurous and unusual commissions, highest quality international artists, and balanced with Scottish-based performers and commissions supporting the development of the experimental/underground scene in Scotland.

The combination of some lack in artistic quality and the risk inherent in new commissions were the only downsides of the event.

Name: Tamsin Mendelsohn

Date: 20 October 2007

~~Specialist Advisor~~

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	<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>	4	<p>The four music events this evening were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New commission by composer Kaffe Matthews, with young pipers Jarlath Henderson and Chris Gibbs – in connections with the Sonic Bed installation.</li> <li>▪ Seven Things <i>One on One</i> limited series of personal performances of a unique piece for one audience member only</li> <li>▪ Richard Youngs – solo singer and instrumentalist</li> <li>▪ Phantom Orchard – free improvisers Zeena Parkins (harps) and Ikue Mori (electronic sounds and visuals)</li> </ul> <p>The range of events in one evening was varied and exciting. Some were more successful than others (see below), but the overall evening was a balance of mind and ear-opening experiences.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <p>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>	4	<p>This was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the festival – which has been held at the Tolbooth since its inception.</p> <p>As expected, the festival included a range of experimental music and film acts/events, in which audiences are able to attend and sample several different things every day and evening. The festival achieved an impressive balance between national, international and Scottish-based acts - important for supporting the development of the scene in Scotland.</p> <p>Three new commissions by Kaffe Matthews, Bill Wells and Seven Things label also made this an exciting programme and a bumper anniversary year contributing to several new works for this unusual arena of music-making.</p> <p>The commissioning of the Sonic Bed and related performance by Kaffe Mathews, Jarlath Henderson and Chris Gibbs was a special event for this evening and the festival. This was an adventurous undertaking, bringing two very different musical traditions together – traditional bagpipes and electro-acoustic sound manipulation.</p> <p>The Sonic Bed installation itself was very unusual. It was an enjoyable experience although I felt a little limited in its staticness. It could perhaps have had even more edge if the design of the bed had been tied in with the Six Cities Design Festival</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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>	4	<p>taking place around the same time.</p> <p>The festival was billed as a '<i>special line-up of alluring alchemists of sound</i>', with a special folk theme running through the programme.</p> <p>As above, this was the case on the evening I attended. The folk theme was expressed strongly – albeit in an experimental way – through the Sonic Bed, live pipes and electronic manipulation commission. The <i>On One</i> commission and performance was a unique and unusual experience that was brilliantly supported and kept mysterious by the Tolbooth staff!</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>	2-5	<p>The acts did range in quality. At the lowest end, Richard Youngs' 'shamanistic' and 'hypnotic' solo, unaccompanied songs seemed unrehearsed and overly repetitive. Certainly several people walked out of this set and it did not match the ambition and quality of other the other acts.</p> <p>At the opposite end of the spectrum, Zeena Parkins and Ikue Mori were fantastic, clearly highly experienced, had an excellent rapport with each other and were very dynamic to both watch and listen to. As the final act, this was worth waiting for.</p> <p>The Sonic Bed installation was well put together - allowing the listener to lie down in a bed - both hear <i>and</i> feel hints, sounds and vibrations of pipes from different speakers around and underneath the body of the bed. It would be interesting to see if it could be used again in the future in a wider context of piping performances.</p> <p>Similarly, the live performance created a new experience of the pipes by manipulating sounds of breath, bellows and finger tapping, building right up to actual tunes, and a very loud, indoor performance of highland pipes! The piece began well, but seemed to lose its way half-way. This was an adventurous commission, and it seemed to be a new way of working and collaborating for the composer and performers – while not 100% successful on this occasion, this is an area of work that is constantly developing.</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>		

<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, 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>	3-4	A series of performances in one night is always a challenge – this was well met, although an overrun meant some audiences had to miss part of the final act to catch last trains.
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 evening drew c.140 audience members – some of which I recognised from folk, contemporary classical/art and rock backgrounds. Generally all acts were well received, with the odd exception outlined above. There was a good atmosphere in the bar in between acts.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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	DJ and record sales in the bar in between acts enhanced and bound the evening together nicely.
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>		

## 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	Arts centre with full facilities – innovatively using the darkened recording studio for a new commission and performance.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programmes for the evening available on entrance to the venue, clear posters of 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.	In all listings, leaflets in arts venues and the Tolbooth online programme.
Ease of booking and payment	I paid on the door without any difficulties.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Well signposted in Stirling from the train station.
External signage and signposting	Clear.
Internal directional signage	Clear.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Lifts and disabled access toilets.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	A good full evening's worth of festival performances. The only problem was the over-run of shows meaning audiences leaving during the final act to catch last trains from Stirling.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very helpful staff.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	On website, all posters and programme print.

<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.