



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – MUSIC

Organisation/Venue: Queen's Hall
Title of Event: Elliot Carter
Type of Event: Contemporary chamber music
Date of Visit: Sunday 28th August

Overall Rating (Please rate the production 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. NB: for multiple performances or festivals, or if you prefer please feel free to use headings for a more extensive commentary. Please note the artistic assessment according to the rating detailed below)

3-4 An excellent performance by the musicians, and adventurous programming of contemporary music. Overall rating let down by limited imagination in some aspects of presentation (staging and communication to the audience) and confusing programme notes.

Name: __Tamsin Mendelsohn____

Date: __29__/08__/05____

Advisor Scottish Arts Council Music 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 below. 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 may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will 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 Council to report on the overall performance of its Core 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, taking account of the following:

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Quality of production – was the event successful overall in relation to any stated aims (e.g. in the programme or other printed material)	4	<p>This was a showcase of early and late chamber works by important American composer Elliot Carter. This was an interesting choice as the composer is still alive, but in very old age.</p> <p>While the quality of playing this difficult repertoire by the Hebrides Ensemble was excellent and merited a rating of 5, the programme was very difficult to read and understand and rated 3 (see below).</p>
Vision and imagination	3	<p>Elliot Carter is 98 years old and it would have added depth to the experience if someone had mentioned this to the audience, and commented on the experience of playing his music.</p> <p>While it was interesting to hear the early and late works of Elliot Carter, also including one or two works from other composers could have made a pertinent contrast, as well as dilute the intense experience of listening to such challenging contemporary music. The concert was also fairly long – 2.5 hrs including interval.</p>
Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments	5	<p>As stated above, all performers were excellent, making an exciting presentation of this challenging contemporary music. Of particular merit were Willie Conway in the <i>Sonata for Cello and Piano</i> and Stefan Schilli in <i>Inner Song for Oboe</i>.</p>
Quality of Presentation – was the professionally presented from a technical point of view	3	<p>No use was made of lighting. This resulted in the ugly BBC microphone being the brightest thing at the front of the room, along with unsightly lamp wires and shadows.</p> <p>Darkening the room with softer lighting of the stage would have helped create more of an atmosphere. More use of lighting could have also helped the audience to focus on the music during the more challenging works – a recent project researching presentation of classical music has been carried out through the Audience Development department at SAC.</p>

Audience – assess the appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	The concert was very well attended (downstairs of the Queen's Hall fairly full) and audience members seemed to understand and appreciate the programme.
Educational Value – comment where appropriate	NA	

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.

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Suitability of the venue for the event	5	This is a well-known venue for chamber music, and downstairs was full giving a good atmosphere
Information/ interpretive material at venue ¹	3	Unfortunately information relating to the composer and performance in the programme was written in the form of an academic paper - dense, with difficult technical terms, and information on each piece was not given in the order of play, and was included in the main context of the essay. This may have created a barrier to understanding the context of this important composer or find quick information on each work.
Publicity/ pre-publicity ²	5	I saw the concert advertised in the festival programme well in advance. This was also publicised clearly on the Hebrides Ensemble website.
Ease of booking and payment	5	Through Hub Tickets
Location of venue	5	Well-known venue,
External signage and signposting	5	Clear, large signs outside
Internal directional signage	4	Adequate, with very helpful staff

¹ These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

² Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised, commenting on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

Access and provision for disabled people	4	Wheelchair ramp and toilets, however, limited corridor space for passing
Timing of the event	4	Reasonable start time of 7.30pm but a long concert (2.5hours) making a late Sunday finish.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	5	Very helpful
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ³	5	Clear in programme with list of supporters

³ The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:

“The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.”

Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.