



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – MUSIC

Organisation/Venue: Fèis Rois / The Piping Centre, Glasgow

Title of Event: Celtic Connections

Type of Event: Concert

Date of Visit: 2pm, Saturday 29th January 2005

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)

4/5 – successful concert given by excellent young traditional musicians – well-organised event – good venue – satisfied audience.

Name: Ian Ritchie

Date: 6/2/05

Advisor

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)	5	This was a showcase of young musical talent from the Highlands and it succeeded in demonstrating that the region's traditional music has a vibrant future as well as a rich past. The event gave the young people, in some cases very young children, a prestigious public platform to work towards in their classes. The results were performances of a consistently high standard.
Vision and imagination	4	Fèis Rois shows considerable flair in its work and is always developing its activities and roles. While they may be attributes of the organisation itself, vision and imagination were not particularly relevant characteristics for this showcase concert.
Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments	4/5	The young performers ranged from good to excellent. For example group intonation among the fiddles, often a problem with younger string players, was generally superb and it is gratifying that the young musicians are taught to listen carefully to one another.
Quality of Presentation – was the professionally presented from a technical point of view	4	A sequence of performances by different groups of varying sizes can sometimes be clumsy, but this concert was well rehearsed and stage-managed so that the change-overs were generally slick. The performers announced the pieces and described music they were to perform.
Audience – assess the appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	The concert was very appropriate for a Celtic Connections audience. The venue was full – around 190 people, at a guess. The audience reaction was warm and enthusiastic.
Educational Value – comment where appropriate	5	This rating refers to the educational value of the programmes of Fèis Rois in general rather than of this event in particular. The concert demonstrated the quality of teaching and learning that is achieved in the various classes and courses on offer.

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	The Piping Centre is an excellent venue with good acoustics for this kind of concert.
Information/ interpretive material at venue ¹	2	It would have been very difficult for uninitiated folk, arriving at the venue, to find out what the event was about, the assumption perhaps being that nobody would come on spec. The Fèis Rois newsletter on each seat offered some background information but it is a shame not to have any record of the performers' names, the identity of their teachers or the details of the works performed.
Publicity/ pre-publicity ²	3	Celtic Connections programmes will presumably have covered this, but none were in evidence at the venue – perhaps supplies were exhausted by this stage of the festival? Otherwise, there was not much publicity.
Ease of booking and payment	4	No problems with box office.
Location of venue	5	Good central location, close to the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, RSAMD, the bus and railway stations and the M8.
External signage and signposting	5	Fine.
Internal directional signage	4	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people	5	Wholly accessible.
Timing of the event	4	Appropriate length of concert and time of day.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	3	The FoH staff was plentiful and helpful. The bar was very small and there was not enough time to reach the front of the queue and obtain a drink in the interval. The restaurant's opening times paid scant regard to the timing of the performance and had closed by the time the concert was over when some refreshment would have been welcome.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ³		There was no publicity in evidence. However SAC was credited in the organisation's Newsletter.

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

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