




Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – MUSIC**

<b>Organisation/Venue:</b>	National Boys' Choir of Scotland (NYCoS) Glasgow Science Centre	
<b>Title of Event:</b>	BBC Proms in the Park	
<b>Type of Event:</b>	Concert	
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2004	
<b>Overall Rating</b> (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)		
5 for the National Boys' Choir (NYCoS) itself: the reasons are clear from my individual comments (below). They do an important job very well. The standards of training and performance are high.		
The event itself should not be scored overall: it was transformed from a public concert into a studio session and so could not achieve all its goals.		
<b>Name:</b> Ian Ritchie		<b>Date:</b> 14/09/04
<b>Advisor</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 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	This could be a 0, if taken literally, since the event was cancelled because of the weather. This score reflects the quality of the compromise, which was to dovetail hastily reorganised 'studio' contributions from Glasgow within the live presentation of the Last Night of the Proms in London. The result was a smart short performance by the Boys' Choir – 'The Road to the Isles' – effectively incorporated within the whole.
Vision and imagination	5	This is scored for the NYCoS organisation, which runs the Boys' Choir, rather than for the event which was not representative of the choir's normal work. NYCoS has put in place a really strong pyramid of opportunities for young people to learn and participate in choral singing. It is a forward-thinking organisation, offering a wide repertoire, including new work. It has very clear vision, boundless energy and realistic aims.
Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments	5	The fact that the choir was invited to participate in this prestigious, televised event – and had recently also sung in the Edinburgh International Festival, in Chicago and elsewhere – reflected its quality. In the brief example available to me on this occasion, it was clear that the boys' precision of pitch, range of dynamics, concentration and discipline were at least the equal of an adult professional outfit. The Music Director, Chris Bell, is a conductor and chorus trainer of international standing.
Quality of Presentation – was the professionally presented from a technical point of view	5	As noted above, the choir's presentation was of a very high standard. Technically, the BBC achieved a successful programme, linked to London and other UK cities simultaneously, in spite of the cancellation of the open-air concert which was supposed to be at the heart of the event.
Audience – assess the appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	4	The originally conceived concert was firstly for a live 'family' audience, enjoying an evening of light music performed by fine artists in the open air, and secondly to contribute items to an event for a world-wide audience sitting at home. The latter will have been satisfied by the programme as a whole and by the contributions from Glasgow. The live audience in Glasgow was, of course, zero; the TV and radio audiences were vast – and enthusiastic, as far as I could judge.

<b>Educational Value</b> – comment where appropriate	<b>5</b>	This rating is for NYCoS and its Boys' Choir in general rather than for this specific event. That said, for the boys themselves, the prestige and challenge of the occasion itself will have had considerable educational value. NYCoS provides an indispensable choral education for young Scottish people in a programme that is wide-ranging, structured and artistically rewarding. The organisation is uniquely placed and qualified to deliver, through the Youth Music Initiative and, hopefully, other ongoing initiatives, the musical opportunities pledged by the Scottish Executive for every young person in the country.
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## 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.*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comment and key reasons for rating</b>
<b>Suitability of the venue for the event</b>	<b>4</b>	This is hard to rate. The concert was cancelled so there was no opportunity to consider the venue's suitability other than to accept that it was wholly unsuitable for an event in wet and windy weather. The Science Centre building provided a naturally spacious and attractive studio space on site for the hastily organised alternative arrangements.
<b>Information/ interpretive material at venue<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>NA</b>	
<b>Publicity/ pre-publicity<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>5</b>	Wide coverage, including trailers on television, was given to ensure that the event was known to a very wide public.
<b>Ease of booking and payment</b>	<b>4</b>	The concert was ticketed but admission was free. It was easy for the public to apply – until the event 'sold out'.
<b>Location of venue</b>	<b>4</b>	The Science Centre is easily reached by train or car, so it is convenient. It is linked to the Exhibition Centre by two footbridges across the Clyde. It is an attractive spot in good weather.
<b>External signage and signposting</b>	<b>4</b>	It was relatively easy to find the way to the site.
<b>Internal directional signage</b>	<b>NA</b>	The signs were being taken down because the concert was cancelled.
<b>Access and provision for disabled people</b>	<b>4</b>	This assessment is assumed rather than proven.

<sup>1</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

<sup>2</sup> 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

Timing of the event	NA	
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	NA	
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>3</sup>	NA	The event was a BBC promotion and no SAC funding was involved. NYCoS acknowledges SAC in all its promotional materials, such as I was given, but these were not connected to the event under discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> 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.