

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - MUSIC

Organisation/Venue: Scottish Ensemble/Queen's Hall, Edinburgh

Title of Event: Eight Seasons

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, work in progress, opens rehearsal etc)

Performance

Date of Visit: Friday 19 December 2003

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 a Council Officer, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work, 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:

Very Poor –standard falls well below what is acceptable

Poor- not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation

Competent– routine rather than especially interesting

Good –well conceived and executed.

Excellent –conceived and executed to a high standard.

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 ratings detailed above.

1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the **artistic quality** of the event(s)

1.1 Overall production – was the event successful overall in relation to any stated aims (e.g. in the programme or other printed material, and stated aims and objectives)

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The Scottish Ensemble is of very high quality musically. The programme was entitled 'Eight Seasons' and was certainly successful in delivering them through juxtaposing Vivaldi's popular Four Seasons with the less well known Four Seasons of Buenos Aires by Astor Piazzolla. The works were not played alongside each other as such, but integrated through interspersing movements from each. Vivaldi's Spring was followed by Piazzolla's Summer, then Vivaldi's Summer and Piazzolla's Autumn, etc, finishing with Piazzolla's Spring in Buenos Aires.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	x	

1.2 Vision and Imagination.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: To integrate Vivaldi and Piazzolla, a popular composer with an increasingly popular composer, in this way was a brilliant piece of inspirational programming. It formed a holistic evening and gave the audience the chance to focus on two very different composers by way of a common theme.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	X	

1.3 Standard of performance(s) - where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Clio Gould was a brilliant soloist in the Vivaldi, especially in Summer. The Ensemble are young, warmly energetic and seem as if they actually enjoy making music together, a feeling which cannot help but be transmitted to the audience and, in turn, positively affect their enjoyment and pleasure. Jan Waterfield, harpsichord, was particularly outstanding. For example, the familiar music of Vivaldi's Winter sounded fresh, with a real, vital sense of ensemble. The Piazzolla, featuring the rather stylish playing of violinist Jonathan Morton, was both contrasting and complementary at the same time. There was lots of forward movement, witty urgency in Winter, and a wonderful extended 'cello solo from Alison Lawrance in Autumn.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	x	

1.4 Quality of presentation – please comment on whether the event was professionally presented from a technical point of view.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The concert was presented in candlelight with a darkened auditorium, which made for a magical, pre-Christmas atmosphere. The Scottish Ensemble always place importance on the way they appear and present themselves on stage, something which is appreciated by their audiences – they look as if they have made an effort. Standing to play is one of their especially impressive features of presentation.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	x	

1.5 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?

Yes

1.6 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the event.

The Queen's Hall was more or less full and the performance was extremely warmly received.

1.7 If appropriate, please comment on the educational value of the event

It was good to hear some unfamiliar Piazzolla.

2. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and by the venue. Please answer, where relevant, with reference to the checklist below adding any other comments/observations you may have.

2.1 Was the venue suitable for the event?

Yes

2.2 Information/Interpretive material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc)

- range, quantity and clarity.

Very full printed programme available with names of players, programme notes on music, biographies of Scottish Ensemble, Clio Gould and Jonathan Morton and spotlight on half of the dozen instrumentalists. It also gave information on the work of the Education Dept, advance information on forthcoming performances, list of sponsors/patrons and some advertising. B/w photos accompanied the biogs.

2.3 Publicity/Pre-Publicity for the Event (leaflets, posters, etc)

- range, content and when and where available. Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Please also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised. Comment on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information.

Leaflets were available in usual outlets e.g. arts/music venues, shopping malls etc. Press advertising also noticed. Website was given in the programme. It is easy to use and very informative.

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment – very easy
- location – OK – Queen's Hall
- external signposting - OK
- internal directional signing – very good
- access and provision for disabled people – very good
- timing of event – OK - evening

2.5 Customer service

- quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering).

Very good

3. Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding (if applicable)

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 and 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, and computer programmes etc. “

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

Acknowledgement with logo is on printed programme and on website.

Name: Carol Main

Date: 10 January 2004

Advisor **Scottish Arts Council Officer**

(Please tick above as appropriate)