



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – MUSIC

Organisation/Venue: Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Title of Event:

Micheál O Súilleabháin, Niall Keegan and Sandra Joyce with the Scottish Ensemble

Type of Event:

Concert, as part of the Tune Up touring programme, in association with Iomairt Cholm Cille.

Date of Visit: 12 March 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)

Rating: 4

Name: IAIN MACINNES Date: 19/ 3/05

Advisor X

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 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 the final night of a seven-venue tour encompassing Islay, Inverness, Ullapool, Skye, Mull, Strontian and Pitlochry. The event showcased Micheál O Súilleabháin's arrangements and original compositions, with Micheál playing and conducting from the piano, accompanied by flute player Niall Keegan and singer/ bodhran player Sandra Joyce, and a string quartet from the Scottish Ensemble. Being the final night of the tour the production had a well-polished feel to it, with some exemplary playing, and a genuine sense of musical excitement, especially in the pieces involving the full cast.
Vision and imagination	5	This was a rare opportunity for Scottish audiences to experience Micheál O Súilleabháin's work. The pared-back arrangements for string quartet worked very well, and it was a pleasure to hear such effective fusion between folk and classical idioms. Micheál's relaxed and informative introductions contributed a great deal, and he made it clear that he is a passionate advocate of Scots/ Irish cultural links, and the principles involved in Iomairt Cholm Cille.
Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments	5	A very proficient performance all-round, with the Scottish Ensemble warming to the task as the evening progressed. Niall Keegan's flute playing was superb.
Quality of Presentation – was the professionally presented from a technical point of view	3	A power cut at the venue in the afternoon affected sound check and rehearsal time, and this impacted slightly on the quality of stage sound. The evening started with a fairly lengthy statement outlining the funding structure behind the tour, and the principles behind Iomairt Cholm Cille. While this was valuable, it was, nonetheless, a distraction at a time when the audience was expecting the performance to begin. Better, perhaps, to have got the show underway, and to have worked-in a shorter statement later in the evening (possibly after the break?). A good deal of this information was also contained in the programme notes.

Audience – assess the appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	4	The show attracted quite a diverse audience of c 150, clearly incorporating a mixture of regular theatre-goers and Micheál O Súilleabháin enthusiasts. A number of people had travelled from Glasgow and Edinburgh. The show was well-received.
Educational Value – comment where appropriate		

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	4	A comfortable theatre, suitable for a show this size.
Information/ interpretive material at venue ¹	5	Very good programme notes in English, Scots Gaelic and Irish Gaelic.
Publicity/ pre-publicity ²	4	The show and the wider tour had fairly scant publicity in the National Press, but attracted more attention in the Highland local media.
Ease of booking and payment	5	good
Location of venue	5	good
External signage and signposting	5	good
Internal directional signage	5	good
Access and provision for disabled people	5	good

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

Timing of the event	5	good
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	5	good
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ³	5	Prominent in programme notes and posters, and on stage drop-down banners.

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.