

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Applicant name:	St Magnus Festival Limited	
Application Reference number:	G201001055	
Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)	£149,152	£152,000
Officer's recommendation		
<p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks</p> <p><i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p>		
Comments:		
<p>The St Magnus Festival continues to demonstrate clear leadership and vision in the programming of this event. I believe that it is an exemplar in achieving a world class event that is locally rooted in the community – it has a clear balance of artistic ambition, support for Scottish-based and emerging artists, skilful programming of new works and appealing programmes to younger/wider audiences (MagFest) and its strong track record of high quality and ambitious community education programmes.</p> <p>The request for additional investment from this fund will enable it to mainstream strong programme strands of MagFest and the composer/conductor professional development courses.</p> <p>The only areas of development/clarification I have recommended are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A practical strategy for the Equal Opportunities policy, plus development of a strategy for supporting artists from emerging sectors (disability, cultural diversity etc) ▪ Updated action plan with lines of responsibility <p>I would recommend this application as a high priority and should funding be awarded, a submission of a complete artistic programme for 2009-10 with accompanying detailed budgets.</p>		
Officer's overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 31 January 2008 Revised: 20 March 2008
Print name:	Tamsin Mendelsohn	

Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

The panel consisted of Murray Buchanan, Paul Bream, Jim Gaitens, Rachel Nelken and Susan Nickalls, with ratings received from Marie Fielding by email.

Comments:

- The panel recognised this as a sound application with an excellent programme, and commented that the Composers and Conductors courses were a real strength.
- The panel noted that no marketing plan was included in the application.
- The panel felt that Magfest had been summarily dealt with in the application and needed more detail, as the project had to engage with a totally new audience. The panel felt, however, that Magfest was a good idea which would bring in a younger audience to the festival, but thought that more clarification was needed about how it was planned to be developed, and by whom.

The panel rated the importance of the application in being supported as **High**.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

Comments:

The St Magnus Festival (SMF) represents a key strategic priority for the music department. It is possibly Scotland's foremost community festival, combining the highest quality internationally renowned professional artists with equally high quality community and volunteer input, without which the festival simply would not work. SMF has led the way in this regard for many years and the success of events such as Hebcelt and Blas owe a lot to the ground-breaking work done by the SMF team and by the creative vision of Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies, its founder. SMF also engages with the entire island archipelago of the Orkney Islands and not just the Kirkwall mainland.

SMF usually utilises a "resident" orchestra/ensemble who engage in community outreach education projects in addition to their core artistic programme. There are also locally based ensembles, such as the community choir, trained by the SMF director, who perform not only during the festival but throughout the year as a result of their core festival activities. The SMF also crosses art-forms from its predominantly music base so more than satisfies both Scottish Arts Council and the music department's key priority areas.

1. Fit with FXO criteria: Fully.

1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists: Where the SMF has led, others have followed, most notably Hebcelt and Blas. SMF's community engagement is second to none and the recent addition of the Spiegel tent (Magfest) will expand their programme content and audience.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public: As above and throughout my commentary, SMF is continuously seeking to expand activity and needed the impetus provided by being able to access the Spiegel Tent to significantly expand audience reach in what is essentially an island archipelago, not a mainland festival.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management: Excellent board and management, but more FTE administrative input would be welcome.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access: Good equal opportunities remit and exemplary access for the communities throughout the islands.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%: Yes.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities: Fully meets departmental priorities in every regard.

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims: Fully meets all aims in every regard.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

Comments:

The increase in grant requested to £149K and £152K respectively is reasonable if consolidating the conductor's course, now such an important core activity of the festival and additional support for infrastructural development for the festival team. The music department currently allocates an additional £12K for the conductor's course, which has a stand-alone international reputation thanks to the festival's founder and participating composers/conductors such as James MacMillan and Martyn Brabbins who directs the course. The other positive spin-off for Scotland is that the two in-house accompanists for the course; Linda Cochrane and Judith Keaney have gone on to establish significant international careers as concert pianists as a result.

It must also be recognised that to have visiting professional artists and ensembles of the highest calibre is of comparative high cost due to the comparative geographical remoteness. Volunteer input-absolutely crucial to this event and one of its key strengths, also extends to accommodating visiting artists in private homes and this has again become a strength of the festival with many returning artists actively promoting the communities of Orkney far beyond their SMF involvement.

Part of the additional support would contribute to marketing and additional professional support for the director. There was no dedicated marketing plan with the application and whilst the reputation of the SMF is sound, nonetheless with the proposed developments of Magfest, more work needs to be done to really move this event forward. We would also want to see SMF embrace the TuneUp touring programme and engage even more closely with YMI, where appropriate.

The brief comments of the Specialist Advisor's panel endorsed those of the assessing officer (Tamsin Mendelsohn) with whom I also concur. SMF shows a real dedication to programming diverse and interesting material that covers a wide range of cross art-form disciplines, whilst ensuring that its community led elements remain a key part of the programme.

I have no doubt that SMF will not only survive the challenges of the current market place, but significantly add to the positive and challenging portfolio that will be Creative Scotland.

1.1 Application rating: High

A unanimous view expressed by the assessing officer and specialist advisors which I wholly endorse.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating: The quality and diversity of SMG the organisation and the programme it delivers across a wide ranging remit that includes all the Orkney Island archipelago and has an international repute far beyond the communities it so expertly serves.

1.3 Strengths of application: See above and in my commentary.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications: More FTE administrative input would be welcome.

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application: None.

1.6 Development areas identified: Continue to expand and develop and consolidate the Magfest programme into the mainstream SMF portfolio long-term.

1.7 Recommended level of support: As requested at £149,152 and £152,000.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

As already stated, whilst the SMF is “static” it embraces all of the Orkney Island archipelago and is an exemplar in that regard that could be mirrored in other predominantly rural events, whether mainland or island based.

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place? Throughout the Orkney Island archipelago, concentrated on the Kirkwall mainland.

1.2 Where will the audience come from? The SMF audience is truly international.

Head of Department’s overall priority recommendation		HIGH
Head of Department’s signature:		Date: 14 February 2008 Revised 25 March 2008
Print name:	Ian Smith	

Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
Comments: Strong overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects the competitive funding context. Support of £145,000 annually is proposed.		
Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation		High
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £145,000 annually is proposed.		
Directors recommendations to Joint Board		High
Acting Chief Executive signature:	Jim Tough	Date: 10 April 2008

Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
Joint Board Final Decision		APPROVE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£145,000

End of Assessment