

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trust	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001058	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£94,000	£131,000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<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>		
<b>Comments:</b>		
<p>The applicant is a well established organisation with an excellent reputation for providing high quality music experiences. They have been supported through the Music Department's Key Promoters' fund, receiving annual funding of between £30,000 - £35,000 towards a series of six concerts and commissions. There have been a number of areas of concern regarding marketing, fund-raising, audience development, low box office numbers, wider partnerships and co-promotions. However, ECAT have recently recruited Hugh MacDonald as Chair of the board and he has begun to address these issues. The application and business plan both show a commitment to addressing the issues raised by Tamsin Mendelsohn, Music Officer. ECAT have also demonstrated a clear development of their current activities. Their particular developments to note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing performances in other Scottish Cities to engage with new audiences.</li> <li>• Working in partnership with other organisations for the performance of The Spire (St Magnus and Hebrides Ensemble) and for the New Music Festival (in partnership with Glasgow Concert Halls and other music organisations e.g. SCO, BBC SSO, Theatre Cryptic).</li> <li>• Developing outreach activities to include 'Participatory Commissions' and 'New Music Study Group'</li> <li>• Introduction of taster concerts at the start of each season to encourage new audiences.</li> <li>• The artistic programme is ambitious and includes top class international artists, repertoire-based projects and commission-based projects.</li> </ul> <p>The weaknesses of the business plan are the lack of detail in their marketing plan, no equal opportunities policy and no pay scales for staff and/or artist fees. The audience targets have also been omitted from the Business Plan. The plans for evaluation do not provide detail about what methods will be used to evaluate events and processes. The information on the budget does not provide information on how the calculations/ assumptions were made and the organisation is applying for a significant increase on previous funding (313%), presumably due to the special projects programmed. There is also a modest increase in staff costs although not explained what this will cover. It is my opinion that in order to deliver a programme of this size and ambition, further staffing would be required. There is a plan in place to work in partnership with other organisations to share the workload.</p> <p>The organisation should consider funding the special projects from other touring and festival funds – "should they be available". However, the proposal fits the 3 SAC aims and is meeting the music department priorities of provision and distribution of high quality live music performance and education outreach, and Sector forum development through their programme of events.</p>		

<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date:29/01/2008 Revised: 20/3/08
Print name:	Jennifer McGlone	

## 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 felt there were many areas not addressed by the organisation in their application, which resulted in its being quite insular.
- Audience targets were not included in the business plan.
- Weaknesses were identified in the organisation's marketing plan, with audience growth figures in the application deemed to be speculative.
- The organisation's programme outwith Edinburgh needed further development, and how it would work with existing provision, particularly in Glasgow.
- The panel questioned the organisation's audience engagement strategy and felt that no real plan for implementation had been provided.
- The panel acknowledged Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trust's high artistic quality, and encouraged its artistic ambitions.
- The panel recommended that Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trusts have a closer engagement with the Chamber Music Forum.

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

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 Edinburgh Contemporary Arts Trust (ECAT) has established a key role in commissioning, developing and supporting the promotion and performance of contemporary music, predominantly in Edinburgh, with plans to expand that geographical outreach. ECAT has also most significantly enhanced the career development of many young composers who have realised a more sustainable professional profile through significant investment in their early developmental support from ECAT.

We have seen a marked improvement in their organisational infrastructure and administrative output since the ex-CEO of the BBCSSO took on the chairmanship of the board.

For the music department, ECAT must now develop more commercially and reach a wider audience with what is increasingly seen as excellent product. There is an equally increasing interest in the contemporary live music scene in Scotland and ECAT must embrace that interest and exploit it fully.

**1. Fit with FXO criteria:** In part.

**1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists:** ECAT is a significant organisation for the promotion of new music and the support and career development of young composers.

**1.2 Improving your engagement with the public:** Because of the nature of its work, ECAT will always engage with a small niche market and would struggle to expand activity.

**1.3 Good practice in the governance and management:** Much improved at board level, but some concerns in areas of marketing, finance and equalities.

**1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access:** See above in my commentary and in 1.2. Equal opportunities policy needs development.

**1.5 Raising other income at least 25%:** Proposed rather than realistically achievable.

**2. Fit with Departmental priorities:** ECAT certainly plays an important role in fulfilling artist's potential, from the creative and performing aspect equally and must now play an active role in the wider industry sector that would also include the Chamber Music Forum. ECAT also produce high quality performances within a contemporary and experimental medium.

**3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims:** ECAT certainly develop the careers and opportunities for composers under the first aim.

**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:**

There is no doubt that ECAT's strength is in its core programme in Edinburgh, despite limited support from CEC. Their regard and duty of care to young and aspiring composers has been exemplary and their profile as an organisation seems to have benefitted from the chairperson's closer involvement administratively.

I believe that their plans for a wider geographical distribution need more work and have not really been thought through fully and there are serious omissions in their business plan regarding the lack of an equal opportunities policy and pay scales for artists and staff. This was clearly evidenced in the assessing officer's report.

I welcome their desire to seek and expand significant partnerships and to develop education and outreach programmes. The artistic programme set out is also of a consistently high quality, for which they are to be commended.

ECAT have however applied for a significant increase in funding, which I feel is not wholly justified and/or evidenced in their application. They certainly need professional input in the areas of audience development and in marketing and promotion. The high level requested; £94K and £131K respectively is unrealistic and even if we agreed additional input to cover the areas outlined, a more reasonable request would be nearer £60K than £94K. This was a view shared by the Specialist Advisor's panel.

I am keen to see ECAT grow as an organisation as they are of significant strategic value to this department, especially in the promotion of new music, which should cover all genres as they move forward as is already starting to be evidenced in their most recent work.

**1.1 Application rating: Medium**

I agree with both the assessing officer and Specialist Advisor's panel assessment of medium.

**1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:** ECAT is a well-supported organisation and their work in promoting contemporary music is of the highest standard, but medium is an appropriate rating for the application, in my view.

**1.3 Strengths of application:** Maintaining and supporting what they do best as per my comments.

**1.4 Weaknesses of applications:** The diversification and expansion of activity has not been fully thought through and is not matched by the necessary marketing expertise to deliver.

**1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:** The higher request for funding is not fully substantiated and represents a significant risk element. Marketing, administration and staffing levels are not in place to deliver additional projects.

**1.6 Development areas identified:** All fully detailed above and in the three commentaries.

**1.7 Recommended level of support:** £60,000 for both years.

**4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme**

**Comments:**

**1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?** There is no real geographical spread to ECAT's current activities, which nonetheless are of a very high quality. They are planning to address this element in their future planning.

**1.2 Where will the audience come from?** ECAT's audience is a niche audience for contemporary and experimental music and is principally centred in Edinburgh.

<b>Head of Department's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>MEDIUM</b>
<b>Head of Department's signature:</b>		<b>Date: 12 February 2008 Revised 21 March 2008</b>
<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Ian Smith</b>	

<b>Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)</b>		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
<b>Comments:</b> Good overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects development areas identified, the competitive funding context and assessment recommendation. <b>Support of £60,000 annually is proposed.</b>		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		Strong Medium
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

<b>Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)</b>		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £60,000 annually is proposed.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		<b>Strong Medium</b>
Acting Chief Executive signature:	Jim Tough	Date: 10 April 2008

<b>Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions</b>		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation.		
<b>Joint Board Final Decision</b>		<b>APPROVE</b>
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£60,000

**End of Assessment**