

# APPENDIX 3

## MUSIC TOUR CASE STUDY

EARLY MUSIC GROUP  
ARMONIOSA

*'FOR SEVERAL FRIENDS'*

REPORT FOR *THE TOURING EXPERIMENT*  
**BY IMELDA DERVIN**

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## Introduction

This is a case study of a recent tour by the early music group Armoniosa which took place as part of *The Touring Experiment*. The study has been written from the perspective of the producer of the tour, Malachy Robinson with inputs from promoters and the author.

Armoniosa was established in 2006. The group has toured twice: it toured in February 2007 with the support of a Music Network Performance and Touring Award and again in September/October 2007. The latter tour is being looked at for the purposes of this study.

The study will look at Robinson's objectives in four specific areas in relation to the tour:

- Artistic
- Audience and Marketing
- Technical
- Financial, Management and Organization

The study will then look at what the tour outcomes were in each of these four areas, what the learning was on behalf of the producer and whether the producer's objectives have changed. The study will conclude with a set of recommendations based on the learning from this tour.

## Background

Malachy Robinson is a professional musician living and working in Ireland. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music in London and the University of London where he completed a Masters Degree in Historical Musicology. His particular interest in historical performance has seen him work with the Academy of Ancient Music and the Irish Baroque Orchestra and is the basis for him being a founder member of Trio Quattro and Armoniosa which are two period instrument groups in which he plays the G-violone da gamba. He is also a founder member of the Crash Ensemble and of Lunfardia. Robinson has performed with Vanbrugh, Callino, Parisii, T'Ang and Vogler String Quartets.

When people refer to Early Music, they are generally alluding to European classical music from the Medieval period, through the Renaissance to the Baroque period. The Baroque period in music began circa 1600 and went on until roughly 1750. The era falls into early, middle and late baroque periods and encompasses Italian, French, English and German styles. The most well-known exponents of the period were Monteverdi (1567 - 1643) and Gabrieli (1554 - 1612) early baroque, Corelli (1653 - 1713), Purcell (1659 - 1695), Geminiani (1687 - 1762) and Scarlatti (1660 - 1725) middle baroque and Vivaldi (1678 - 1741), Handel (1685 - 1759) and Bach (1685 - 1750) late baroque.

A year ago, a shared passion for baroque music and a keen interest in historically informed performance inspired Robinson, his wife Anita Vedres (baroque violin), Hannah Tibell (baroque violin) and her partner Richard Sweeney (lute) to form the early music ensemble Armoniosa. Vedres studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London and in Utrecht's Musik Conservatorium. She is a former member of the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the National Symphony Orchestra and is now specializing in baroque violin. She is a member of the Irish Baroque Orchestra and has made appearances with Camerata Kilkenny and Opera Theatre Company playing baroque violin. Swedish-born Hannah Tibell studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music both in London. Specializing in baroque violin since 2000, she appears regularly with the Gabrieli Consort and Players, the Irish Baroque Orchestra and the London Handel Orchestra. Richard Sweeney also studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He performs on a regular basis with many of the UK's leading ensembles including The King's Consort, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Sonnerie.

The members of Armoniosa perform on gut-stringed instruments which give a very pure sound when played. This follows the practise of the period that Armoniosa chooses its music from - the baroque period (C.1600 - 1750). The violins employed by Vedres and Tibell are historical instruments set up in a manner appropriate to the period. They play the violins without chin or shoulder rests (as they were not in existence then). Also, the bow of the

baroque violin is quite different to its modern equivalent in that it thins at the top to form an exaggerated point. The Violone played by Robinson is the second lowest member of the viol family – a group of bowed (and sometimes plucked) fretted stringed instruments. It resembles a modern day cello and is played similarly. Sweeney's Lute has a fretted neck and a round deep back.

The shared desire of the group to hone their performance style – in the context of historical performance – and bring music of the 17th and 18th centuries to a wider audience was the basis for both tours undertaken to date. The programme that they chose for this second tour, which was entitled 'For Several Friends' comprised mainly music from the English style of the Baroque period and included works by composers such as Matthew Locke (1621 – 1677), Henry Purcell (1659 – 1695), Georg Muffat (1653 – 1704) and Nicola Matteis (1670 - 1760).

## **Methodology**

In compiling this case study the author had a total of five in-depth meetings with the producer and attended four of the concerts on tour in Clifden, Galway, Sligo and Kilkenny. The author also spoke to Richard Sweeney and Anita Vedres, members of Armoniosa, the Festival Director of Clifden Community Arts Week, the Administrator of Music For Galway, the Artistic Director of Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music, General Manager of the Model Art and Niland Gallery in Sligo, the Chairperson of Music in Kilkenny and the Music Teacher in the Ursuline College, Sligo.

## Objectives of the Producer in undertaking this tour

### Artistic Objectives

#### *Objective 1*

The primary artistic objective of Malachy Robinson in organizing this tour was to give Armoniosa an opportunity to grow artistically as an ensemble *'The intention of this tour is for our own artistic growth ... it will allow us to refine our style'*. He believed it would allow the group to develop their ensemble playing, each unit working more effectively as part of the whole thus reaching homogeneity of sound. The tour was not seen as an end in itself but would afford them time performing together in which they could refine their style and focus on repertoire that suits the make-up of the group.

Armoniosa had to find a programme of music to fit their ensemble (2 violins, violone and lute) because, unlike a string quartet, it is not an ensemble that exists as an entity and not a lot of music has been written for this particular grouping. Even though the choice of programme material is to a large extent democratic, Richard Sweeney, the lute player in the group, guides the process. Both he and Hannah Tibell are full-time baroque performers and so they have a wealth of knowledge about the repertoire. Robinson, and the group as a whole, see Richard Sweeney as being artistically in charge in terms of sourcing music that will fit the group. Sweeney also concentrates on the historical context for the programmes and likes to link works in an historical way. He *'makes initial suggestions for phrasing and tempos'*. Sweeney says *'I have tried to source music that will suit our group ... I feel that the music of certain composers does not work with our particular combination of instruments ... we have limited parameters'*. There is, however, an enormous amount of repertoire that the group can draw from but very often it does need tweaking to make it work for their instrument grouping. Richard says *'Everyone was keen to do some Purcell music in the programme. Purcell sonatas are great but they would not work with our instruments'*. Given that they wanted to include Purcell, Malachy Robinson says *'we took pieces from two different Purcell suites (chosen by Hannah) originally written for the theatre and including viola parts, and constructed a suite of our own'*. Richard Sweeney looked at the music in advance and focussed in on areas where the viola parts, whether thematic or harmonic, might be incorporated into other parts (violin or lute). Sweeney says, *'it wasn't until we were playing through the work that we decided exactly how we would rearrange the viola parts - they were covered by Anita on the 2nd violin or by me on the lute'*. Robinson outlined that this kind of tweaking of arrangements was perfectly legitimate within the style and would have been common practice in the 17th and 18th centuries. It is a huge part of what he describes as *'refining their style'*. The programme for this tour also included music by Matthew Locke which was specifically written for their instrumentation.

The group got great feedback from the public after its first tour which took place in February 2007. One comment from an attendee at their concert in Kilkenny said *'I think you are really on to something ... you sound so good together ... it just sounds right'*. Robinson excitedly outlined that it seemed, from what they had done, Armoniosa was actually reminiscent of a grouping that could have existed as one of the standard groupings of the period. He was very excited about the fact that he felt the group was *'on to something'* in terms of recreating performances that are historically informed; he does not know of it currently existing in any other way. He felt that this style of performance should be pursued artistically and the wealth of repertoire should be explored by Armoniosa.

## **Objective 2**

Robinson outlined that Armoniosa's aim is *'always to communicate with the audience.'* They are very keen to bring this music, which is largely unknown, to a much wider audience. Robinson describes the music as terrific fun and he expects that people will respond positively to it and, very importantly, want to hear more of it. He has a genuine belief that the music is tremendously appealing and that the repertoire deserves to be brought to audiences. He hopes that *'after audiences hear it once, they will want to hear more'* and that Armoniosa will be able to continue to perform this repertoire in Ireland. *'We are going to continue to pick repertoire that suits us and that we can communicate absolutely earnestly.'*

Robinson believes there is great reward in giving something new to audiences. He says, *'the reward to the audience that I would have in mind - and I speak for myself in this - is bringing repertoire to people that they have never heard of or even come across. The reward is for people to be exposed to something new and unknown ... like opening an encyclopaedia... you look for something and then you might follow it up and it will lead to you to something else. People know what string quartets do and they know what a symphony orchestra will give them ... they know the repertoire already to a certain extent'*. He stressed that they don't readily hear this type of repertoire...*'we can introduce them (the audience) to something that is new and certainly accessible and there is so much of it that people have not been exposed to'*. He likens the reward for people to opening a treasure chest in anticipation of the riches inside. *'We also must make sure that we expose people to this music in the best way possible'*. He said that they have their own standards to satisfy which are very high in terms of performance. *'The listener may not necessarily be educated in this music - this may be different with the Early Music Festival audience in Sligo - but the quality of the performance has to be the best that it can be'*.

## Audience and Marketing objectives of the Producer

Table 1

Date and Time	Tour Location	Promoter	Financial arrangement
29 Sept 1.00pm	Church of Ireland, Clifden	Clifden Community Arts Festival	Guarantee: €800
1 Oct 8.00pm	St Nicholas's Church, Galway	Music for Galway	Guarantee: €800
5 Oct 1.00pm	Aula Maxima	UCC Lunchtime Concert Series	Guarantee: €800
6 Oct 8.00pm	Airfield House	Airfield House	Guarantee: €800
27 Oct 5.00pm	Model Arts & Niland Gallery	Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music	Guarantee: €800
28 Oct 4.00pm	Castalia Hall, Ballytobin, Co Kilkenny	Music in Kilkenny	Guarantee: €800

### **Audience expectations**

Robinson outlined that he would be hoping for audiences (for the evening concerts) of around 100; he would deem this very successful. He felt that the most appropriate venue for them was a venue with a capacity of 150. *'Sometimes it will be bigger – the Aula Maxima in Cork is bigger; too big to be ideal. What we do is all about a refined sound with small detail so the idea is to have the audience up close ... the audience should be able to see our eyebrows wriggle. These baroque instruments are not as loud as modern instruments; they are not designed to sound loud. This is small music on a small scale'. 'The fortunate thing is that we are very portable; economically it should be possible to continue to make it work. We can all climb into one car'. As the Sligo concert was part of a festival, Robinson figured there would be a number of seasoned baroque concert-goers in attendance.*

### **Marketing**

In every case on tour, Robinson saw the promoter as being the mediator of the relationship between Armoniosa and its audience. He felt that the promoter's responsibility for bringing in the audience was implicit in the fact that they were paying a fee to Armoniosa for each concert (see Table 1). He outlined his limited experience in the area of marketing and said *'It is only our second tour and I am still only a novice at these kinds of things'*. The producer and the promoters did not discuss or agree on a joint or otherwise

marketing plan. According to Robinson, the promoters had an investment in the concert so there would be an incentive to make sure that they did not lose money, hence they would work hard at bringing in an audience... *'it seems to me that it was good to ask for a fee ... and in doing so put the ball in their court to earn back the money they were giving us ... by putting bums on seats'*.

Despite the fact that Robinson felt the responsibility for bringing in the audience lay with the promoter, he did send out press releases... *'I did try to publicize it in a general way'*. He had contacts for music journalists in the national press and made sure he covered all the national listings. He also got a long list of more general press contacts from Airfield House to which he circulated press releases and information on how to access photographs. However, *'overall, we were depending on the venue'* to market the concerts. *'I don't have the knowledge of how to go about it'* he said of marketing the concerts, *'you'd have to have knowledge of local press in order to do that'*. He said that the press release he sent to the Administrator of Music for Galway was printed in the local papers... *'you have to know who to send it to and if it's coming from a source that they (local journalists) know and that they have already built up a relationship with, they are more lightly to pay attention to it and print it'*.

Robinson was also keen to gather names and email addresses for a mailing list for the group which they could use to publicize further concerts. To this end, he put together a short questionnaire for distribution on tour. The questionnaire included spaces for Name, Contact no. and Email address along with the following questions:

- Where did you hear about this concert?
- Were you attracted by the repertoire or the ensemble?
- Would you be inclined to seek out similar music now?

The questionnaire also invited additional comments. Audience members would find the questionnaire on their seats and they were invited to leave the completed questionnaire on their seat on leaving.

Robinson feels that if he had the knowledge and expertise and had more time that he could promote Armoniosa's concerts, after all, he would have a passion for the project that would be lacking in a promoter. In an ideal world there could be a meeting of strategies between the producer and the promoter regarding how concerts should be sold.

### ***Education***

Armoniosa had not originally intended to undertake an education project in tandem with the tour. The main reason that Robinson planned it was because it was included on the Expression of Interest form for *The Touring Experiment*. He felt that Armoniosa would be more successful in their bid to

be involved in *The Touring Experiment* if they were undertaking education work. He did not know, however, how the group would work together in an educational context. Robinson himself is very well experienced as a workshop leader and has done many education projects in different music contexts in the past.

Robinson planned the workshops (Appendix 1) with the promoters in Sligo, Clifden, Galway and Cork. He was optimistic that the workshops would go well, given his experience, and the expertise of the group, and felt that there was great value in introducing children and their teachers, not just to themselves and their instruments, but to a whole world pre-Mozart that is not touched on by the curriculum. The workshops themselves would be performance-based with the ensemble playing extracts from the concert programme. Participants got an opportunity to 'get up close' and ask questions about the instruments, the musicians and the music.

Robinson hoped that the workshops would have an impact on audiences for the tour. He felt that some children may be intrigued enough by what they heard during a workshop to come back to a concert (all workshops took place in advance of concerts). He also intended to pass around fliers to all workshop participants to bring home to their families.

### **Technical and Production Objectives from the perspective of the Producer**

When asked about his aims in the area of technical and production values Robinson said they were minimal. He said '*we just need four chairs*'. The group themselves bring their stands and stand lights; he said that '*it's just the four of us and there is no need for staging of any kind*'.

Robinson did however outline that it was very important for Armoniosa to perform in an appropriate space. They always try and perform in venues that they feel are appropriate to them in terms of size and acoustics. He said of the Model and Niland Gallery in Sligo '*it was important to me that we wouldn't be in the black box space but that we would perform in the gallery upstairs*'. This was for acoustic reasons. Lighting is not so important he feels, as their stand lights allow them to create an intimacy that more elaborate lighting would hinder. He believes that in creating the intimacy, the audience is very focused on the music - the lighting is small so people are drawn close.

When the observer asked what Robinson thought about how Armoniosa's performances look to an audience and suggested that perhaps there may be other ways of creating an atmosphere of intimacy with lighting, he said that maybe that was something they would consider '*maybe we should be thinking about visuals. We don't think about them - maybe candles, they were used at the time*'. Robinson then described a concert that Armoniosa

had given at the Hunt Museum in Limerick earlier on in the year at which candles created a very atmospheric space in which they enjoyed performing.

Robinson outlined that he had discussed venues with the promoters of the tour in each area. Armoniosa had performed previously at Airfield House, Castalia Hall and the Aula Maxima in UCC and felt very happy that the spaces suited the group though the Aula Maxima in UCC was on the large size in terms of capacity. Robinson also knew the gallery at the Model Art and Niland Gallery and the Church of Ireland in Clifden as he performed there in the past with other ensembles so he knew that the acoustic was clear and would suit them. The only venue that he did not know was St Nicholas's Cathedral in Galway and he was keen to see how the performance would work there. He had been in close contact with the Administrator of Music for Galway regarding the positioning of the group in the cathedral and a mutual decision was made on where they would eventually perform within the space. Robinson felt that there were not a lot of unknowns about the venues that the group would be performing in and had no anxieties around the technical or production values of any of the concerts.

### **Finance, Management and Organizational objectives of the Producer**

In order to be able to take part in *The Touring Experiment*, Robinson was informed that Armoniosa needed to be registered as a business and it needed to have a bank account in its name. He says '*Now that we have the business we'll have to pay bank charges and we'll have to submit a tax return; this will incur more costs*'. He continues to outline that when Armoniosa received the Music Network Performance and Touring Award '*Music Network gave the cheque directly to me*'. Robinson in turn paid all monies due from his own personal account. Robinson says that he decided to see what other ensembles and groups do in respect of this; he spoke to the Callino Quartet who told him that they are not registered as a business and that they apply for projects and awards as individuals. What Malachy is stressing here is that the costs incurred in becoming a business and paying bank charges on a business account have not been budgeted for. He continues in relation to this that on the other hand '*there is a legitimacy about the business. We can get electronic transfers and it is good to keep Armoniosa funds separate to my personal funds*'.

The discussion around management and organization centred on Robinson's role as the producer of the tour. He is responsible for the administration of the tour and relationships with promoters. '*It seemed easier for me to just do the administration and have an overview of what is being done rather than delegating and ending up with a situation where there is overlap and people don't know what the other is doing. I have learned an awful lot and have got a lot better at it*'. He feels, however, '*it's a lot of work and perhaps it would be better to divide it out but that could be harder to do. Some people are likely to be better at it and others would be stressed by the job.*' He outlines

that Richard Sweeney is more in charge when it comes to artistic elements. *'Richard and Hannah (Tibell) are full time baroque players so they have a greater knowledge of repertoire'*. Robinson says of Sweeney that *'he won't take on the title of Artistic Director as this is a small group and everyone has an input'*.

Robinson stressed that what he had done in terms of putting the tour together was a lot of work for him. *'Now we have to plan further in advance as venue calendars are being booked earlier ... more than 6 months in advance'*. Even though Robinson feels that he can do the job of producing a tour, and in some ways is the best person to sell the group to promoters, he thinks that it would be better if an agent would take them on. Having planned this tour, he wants to talk to an independent agent about taking them under their wing i.e. to produce Armoniosa's next tour. Robinson believes that this would not remove all administrative duties from him but would mean that for the most part, the agent would be dealing with putting the tour together and he, in his own words, *'could get on with being a musician'*. He continues *'part of me would like to do this job and it certainly is rewarding putting the pieces together. But it takes a lot of time'*. This is time, Robinson feels he should be putting into his music as a performer. He feels that the administration of a tour is a big job and that it could work better if someone else, who had a lot of experience in the area, were to do it. *'I think that a good agent would make for a more efficient operation. My aim is to interest someone in taking us on...ultimately, I'd like to hand it over'*

From the start, Robinson was confident that the budget that he had drawn up for the Armoniosa tour would cover the project. He had no worries about his aim to come in on budget even though he was not very experienced in the area of tour budgeting *'This is only the second budget I have ever done. The only other budget I did was for the Music Network Performance and Touring Award which came in under budget'*. He outlined that he was a little generous in some areas when filling in the budget e.g. he allowed for overnights in all venues on tour even though he knew they would not need this provision everywhere e.g. they intended to drive back to Dublin after certain concerts. He outlined *'Maybe that's not the way to do it ... I am quite new to this but I know that you've got to have some kind of contingency amount and we are running into extra expenses in other areas - most notably regarding education work in Sligo'*. Also, Robinson outlined *'I wasn't sure when I did the budget how many, if any, of the local promoters would be able to accommodate us. I didn't expect any of them to as last time nobody offered'*. He continued to outline that the festivals on tour offered them accommodation *'So we will save on accommodation as Sligo and Clifden are hosting us'*.

Another area in which Robinson felt they might run over budget is in the area of flights. Again, he feels that the amount that he has entered in terms of accommodation should cover this.

When it came to artist fees, Robinson spent some time working out what fees he should pay the musicians in the group per performance and he eventually settled on a figure based on what musicians are paid in other circumstances. He used his experience of playing with other performing groups both small and medium scale to work this out. He outlines the importance of keeping fees within an acceptable range. He says *'there is always a possibility that once you set up the tour, better paying work may come in. So you have to pay enough. I set the fee at €400 per player per concert inclusive of rehearsals'*. In addition, based on information that he got from the National Concert Hall, he set the fee for education and outreach work at €100 per player per hour.

Robinson said that he signed one contract with Music for Galway regarding the concert at St Nicholas's Cathedral. He neither wrote up his own nor signed any contracts issued by the other venues on tour. Only one written contract exchanged hands in advance of the Armoniosa tour. Robinson outlines *'I did ask people to respond via email confirming all arrangements and conditions'* and also had very regular phone contact with most of the promoters. The 2 areas in which there were difficulties contacting people were in Clifden and Sligo. Insurance was not mentioned by either side to the other (or referred to in the Music for Galway contract) so no safeguards were put in place should one side renege on what was agreed either verbally or via email.

## The Tour

### Rationale for the selection of tour locations

The rationale for the locations on tour (Table 1, page 8 of this document) is linked to known territory and relationships that existed or that were built up after Armoniosa's first tour early in 2007 and also, an intention, on the part of the producer, to work with already existing structures e.g. festivals and concert series, who have built up audiences over the years and are adept at marketing.

### Clifden

At a performance in Galway during their first tour in early 2007, Armoniosa were approached by a very enthusiastic audience member, who had an association with Clifden Community Arts Week, to come and perform at the festival in September. *'We were delighted that someone approached us directly after a concert ... she said she would tell the Festival Director that he had to have us at the festival'*. Subsequently, the Festival Director got in touch with Robinson to tell him they were interested in programming Armoniosa. Robinson felt that given the enthusiasm with which he was

approached and the fact that this was a well established festival, it would be good for the group to perform in Clifden. He also felt that the festival had already established audiences – not necessarily for their particular type of music – but for music in general, and that their marketing operation would sell the concert successfully.

### ***Galway***

Armoniosa had performed at the Aula Maxima in University College Galway during their first ever tour in early 2007. Robinson contacted the well established Music for Galway (MFG) given their very good professional reputation and their committed following in Galway. MFG were prepared to work with the dates offered by Robinson and agreed to include them in their annual series of concerts. Also, Galway is a large centre of population and geographically it made sense to go to there directly after Clifden. Armoniosa felt that the Aula Maxima in UCG was a perfect space for the group to perform in terms of size and acoustics and so they wanted to return. This however was not to be as it was not available on the date that worked for both Armoniosa and Music for Galway. Robinson outlined *'Music for Galway offered St Nicholas's Cathedral as an alternative and we were quite happy to try it out'*.

### ***Cork***

Armoniosa approached the Music Department of University College Cork as the group had performed there before as part of their annual lunchtime series of concerts. Robinson felt that this would be a good opportunity to build on the audience that they got the last time they performed there in early 2007. Also, the fact that it was an established series led him to believe that it had a steady audience already.

### ***Dundrum***

Likewise, Armoniosa had also performed at Airfield House in Dundrum on their last tour. Robinson feels that this is a perfect venue for the group and he was very happy with the relationship they built with the administration and the audience that they got there on the previous occasion. Robinson outlined that Airfield has a very dedicated group of patrons who attend all sorts of concerts there. He felt that they would build on the audience they got last time out and also, that the good marketing operation at Airfield would ensure a good attendance.

### ***Sligo***

Robinson contacted the Artistic Director of the Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music as he thought that it would be a suitable platform for Armoniosa. He said *'I had performed here before with another early music*

*group and knew it was suitable ... and I know the Artistic Director quite a while in connection with early music. I think when I spoke to him, I hadn't really considered us actually playing ... (at the festival); I wanted to add Sligo to the schedule because there is a following for early music there'. As it worked out, Rod Alston offered them a date during the festival. This would be an ideal opportunity to be marketed as part of a festival that concentrates particularly on baroque music in an area that has an early music following.*

### ***Kilkenny***

Robinson has a long established relationship with Music in Kilkenny (MIK) through his involvement with other early musicians. He knew that MIK was very professional, marketed its concerts very well and had a very dedicated following. Armoniosa was offered a Sunday afternoon slot at 4pm – a regular slot in their calendar – at Castalia Hall in Ballytobin just outside Callan in Co Kilkenny.

### **Marketing**

Robinson organized for the printing of A3 posters (which were over-printed with venue names and the appropriate concert information) and A5 fliers (including all of the dates on tour) out of his budget. He sent poster and flier packs to all of the venues on tour except Sligo, who were printing their own publicity material under the banner of the Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music. Apart from these packs, he included emailed a press release and photographs of Armoniosa to all venues.

Despite the fact that Robinson felt the responsibility for bringing in the audience lay with the promoter, he did send out press releases... *'I did try to publicize it in a general way'*. He had contacts for music journalists in the national press and made sure he covered all the national listings. He also got a long list of more general press contacts from Airfield House to which he circulated press releases and information on how to access photographs. However, *'overall, we were depending on the venue'* to market the concerts. *'I don't have the knowledge of how to go about it'* he said of marketing the concerts, *'you'd have to have knowledge of local press in order to do that'*. He said that the press release he sent to the Administrator of Music for Galway was printed in the local papers... *'you have to know who to send it to and if it's coming from a source that they (local journalists) know and that they have already built up a relationship with, they are more lightly to pay attention to it and print it'*.

## Post Tour Outcomes

### Artistic outcomes

From Malachy Robinson's point of view, the tour allowed Armoniosa to reach its artistic objectives. *'There wasn't a concert that wasn't worth going to and that I wouldn't have gone to myself'*. He outlined that the artistic objective is not to be popular but to be successful in achieving what you want. *'We got more into our own sound and we defined that sound more for ourselves. We were performing together with more relaxed spontaneity; we developed mutual understanding and had room to experiment'*. He went on to say *'the sound was so reliable even early on in the tour that at the concert in Galway, when Anita was very ill with an infection, and was really just coping, we still managed to perform very well as a group. The fact that it went so well shows that the group has a basic level of performance that is extremely good and, from some of the feedback we got, that's why people find us attractive as a unit'*.

Sweeney feels that the group have benefited greatly in terms of their artistic growth from the experience of the tour. He felt in advance that the fact that there were gaps in the tour (29 Sept, 1 Oct, 5 & 6 Oct, 27 & 28 Oct) could have proved difficult; he felt that they could lose their intimacy and their ability to play well as a unit. However, he says that he is happy that they maintained the intimacy and the standards of performance. He felt that they performed better during this tour than during their first tour earlier in the year in which they didn't achieve anything like the intimacy of this. He outlines how important the issue of intimacy is with this music - the audiences need to be close and need to be drawn in so that they can really hear the nuances in the music. This, he felt, they achieved on the whole. The repertoire that they had chosen allowed them to refine their sound - he felt it was a very blended sound with equal voices.

All of the promoters associated with this tour felt that Armoniosa achieved a high level of performance. The Festival Director of Clifden Community Arts Week felt that the group gave a wonderful performance of a quality programme. He felt that Armoniosa added a completely different dimension to the festival this year. The Administrator of Music for Galway felt that the programme was a little too long but artistically was of a high standard. The Artistic Director of the Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music felt that the concert was delivered in a very appropriate style. The feedback from the Chairperson from Music in Kilkenny was very positive indeed. She spoke on behalf of the committee who felt that artistically, they had really improved as an ensemble.

The author, who attended concerts in Clifden, Galway, Sligo and Kilkenny, felt the group worked very well together across the concerts, each blending their own contribution into the whole. They had a very open and welcoming

style of presentation and were very successful at creating the sense of intimacy described by Sweeney that they feel is crucial to the way that this music is performed. They communicated readily with each other as well as to the audience; they provided historical contexts for the works that they were performing through their verbal introductions and used stories and anecdotes to create a very easy and informal atmosphere which immediately put the audience, at ease. Their physical closeness with the audience allowed the listeners to pick up on the musical nuances referred to by Sweeney. This closeness also allowed the group to communicate through physical gesture – the inhalation at an upbeat and their facial expressions – which served to draw the audience in.

## Audience and Marketing outcomes

*Table 2*

Tour Location	Audience Figures	Capacity
Church of Ireland, Clifden	50	120 (approx.)
St Nicholas’s Church, Galway	81	160 (seats out)
UCC Cork	65	280
Airfield House, Dundrum	52	75
Model Arts & Niland Gallery	34	70 (approx.)
Castalia Hall, Co Kilkenny	107	200 (approx.)

Robinson felt that the audience in Clifden could have been a lot better – it numbered approximately 50 people according to the Festival Director of Clifden Community Arts Week. Robinson mentioned that many of the audience were fellow musicians who play in the Irish Chamber Orchestra – who were due to perform in the same venue later that night – and that without them, the attendance would have been poor. Robinson had the impression that not a lot of work had gone into promoting the concert. He had experienced difficulties in making contact with the administration on many occasions in advance of the concert and was a little bit anxious about how things would go, he accepted that because they were part of a festival, the concert would be marketed alongside other events, but he felt that the level of attention given to them was low... *‘they put us in the brochure, so I knew we were there to be read about ... but I doubt that this had a major impact on how many people came’* - he feels that this was borne out by the number of people that he knew in the audience. He alluded to the fact that they had arrived in Clifden the day before as they were doing education workshops in the schools and expected to see some sign of the concert around the town. However, they saw only a couple of posters and when they

got to the Church of Ireland on the day of the concert, there was a flier on the wall inside the door. He said... *'I think we were viewed as a festival filler, very cheap and they didn't have to put any effort into it. I could not see why the church was not full. It seems to me that if you know how to do it and you put in the effort, why wouldn't you fill it?'* He did follow this up by saying that he has no experience in the area of marketing and therefore, might have the wrong assumptions where this is concerned but he believes that if you really want to sell something *'you'll go out there and sell it ... if you have a good product it should be easier to sell'*.

The Festival Director in Clifden outlined that the audience for Armoniosa's lunchtime concert was bigger than what they would normally expect for a concert at this time of day. He added that Robinson had put in a lot of effort, was very committed and very professional and sent an adequate amount of publicity materials and information in advance.

From Clifden, Armoniosa moved to Galway. Robinson felt that Music for Galway (MFG) had done a good job in promoting the concert. The level of contact with the Administrator from MFG was very high. She had been very proactive in asking them for their press release and in getting all of their posters put up around the city. As Robinson did not send a big enough allocation of posters, MFG printed an additional amount to cover city as well as county sites. Robinson said that he wasn't disappointed with the audience. Robinson said *'I am happy ... it was a Monday night and a very bad night'* in terms of weather. The Galway concert was the first evening performance on tour which began at 8pm.

The Administrator of Music for Galway felt that the audience was on the low side for this concert. She did however add that the Armoniosa concert was the first in MFG's annual series and that historically, there has always been a low turn-out for this concert. MFG's Administrator found the press release and photographs forwarded by Robinson very useful in terms of getting press coverage for the concert.

Robinson felt that the experience in Cork was not so good. He felt that given that this was a free concert, targeted at music students in a university, that the number should have been better than that. Armoniosa did get some very favourable and encouraging comments from members of the audience in Cork.

Robinson was very happy with the attendance at Airfield house. He thought that the majority of the audience were patrons of Airfield and that they had come along on the basis of the Airfield brochure; the circulation of this brochure, he felt. Robinson outlined that they did get a lot of comments from audience members who had never heard of the group before.

In Sligo, the audience was bigger than expected by Robinson and the festival. Robinson felt that for a five o'clock concert, they did well. Just

before the performance commenced, extra chairs had to be set out for the number of people who wanted to attend.

The Artistic Director of the Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music felt that the audience for Armoniosa's concert was very satisfactory. The General Manager of the Model, also felt the attendance at this concert was good but felt that overall number of attenders for the Festival as a whole were down on previous years. She outlined that the Armoniosa concert had been marketed within the context of the festival.

The author noted that the Artistic Director of Model: Sligo Early Music Festival, had asked the group to perform a different programme to the one they were performing on tour as it fitted more readily into the theme of the entire festival. The fact that this was not an issue for the group shows their versatility and their execution of the programme was of as high a standard as the tour programme.

The concert at Castalia Hall in Ballytobin attracted an audience from the surrounding area and from the Camphill Community on the same site. The concert was on a Sunday afternoon at 4.00pm and Robinson was happy with the audience attendance. He said that Music in Kilkenny has a very solid committed audience... *'they have regular patrons and it is such a lovely venue, people will travel to be here'*. One audience member who spoke to him after the concert told him that he had travelled from Waterford for the concert.

The Chairperson of Music in Kilkenny (MIK) outlined that they were happy with the audience at Castalia Hall. Robinson had been in close contact on a regular basis from well in advance of the concert and publicity materials had arrived in good time. MIK had made Robinson aware of the fact that they issue a season brochure every year and that this had a wide distribution.

When asked if Robinson felt he printed enough posters for the tour he said *'I don't think so but we weren't altogether hopeful that they would be put to great use'*. This was based on the experience of their first tour where they felt promoters did not use their publicity material. The evidence for this was the amount of material they found still in the venue when they arrived to give the concert and the lack of a presence of the group around the area. Robinson now feels *'one ought to have more posters and employ an independent person to put them up around an area'*. He said that some promoters on tour used their material to publicize the concert. He outlined that in Galway, where he felt MFG were very organized, they used all of the posters and because they ran out, they printed their own posters for the concert... *'they promote their own concerts very seriously and so they made up more posters'*. He continues *'In fact, I learned something from them: they used a caption from an Irish Times review of the previous tour which I felt was good to have on the poster. We hadn't thought of doing that.'* Robinson feels that *'on the other hand in Cork, I don't know that they put up any*

*posters at all*'. He also says that they didn't see many posters or fliers around Clifden while they were there *'it's not a big village, you would see them if they were there'*. Robinson says that they didn't send posters to Sligo as the Model: Sligo Festival of Baroque Music wanted to print their own under the festival brand.

He continues in relation to publicity materials *'What we could have done with hindsight is send less to Cork and more to Galway if we had known how to distribute them but a better idea would have been to employ a poster person to put the material up in advance'*. Robinson agrees that this comes down lack of prior negotiation regarding how the concerts would be marketed. Had a strategy been drawn up, Robinson would have had an indication of how to distribute his publicity materials.

Armoniosa collected a very small number of completed questionnaires (30 for the whole tour) with audience information and comments on the performances. So in actual fact very little evidence from an audience perspective was actually collected. Even though that Robinson felt that the questionnaires should be entirely voluntary, he agreed that in order to get a better return, Armoniosa could have provided some encouragement to the audience to fill them in. An announcement drawing people's attention to the questionnaires before the start of the performance could have been made. Also, a designated person could have collected the questionnaires as people left.

Robinson was pleased and encouraged by the comments included in completed questionnaires as they were very positive in terms of the concert and people wanting to hear more of this kind of music.

## **Education Outcomes**

Robinson felt that the education workshops that Armoniosa conducted in conjunction with the tour, for the most part, went very well. He felt that the group worked well together in this context. Robinson outlined that it was very evident in every case how much participants were enjoying the workshops *'... you can see that they are in rapt attention ... it's unusual for kids to get that up close ... you know when you are making a real connection by the nature of their reaction'*. It was not very evident, however, that the workshops had a direct effect on the audiences in the areas where they took place.

Perhaps with more advance planning and thought, workshops could be intrinsically linked to performances so that participants automatically attend concerts as part of a more rounded education package.

The workshop targeted at third level music students in University College Cork was disappointing for the group from the point of view of attendance. The workshop had been offered free of charge to students who wished to attend (it was not compulsory) and an invitation was also issued to students

in Cork School of Music. Only two people turned up. Robinson outlined that despite this, they continued with the workshop which he felt went very well and was very worthwhile.

All of the workshops elicited positive responses from children and teachers. The Festival Director of Clifden Community Arts Week outlined that the response from the schools in which Armoniosa conducted workshops was very positive. He felt that they communicated at the appropriate level for each group and that the children were very receptive to Armoniosa's style of presentation. These sentiments were also shared by the Administrator of Music for Galway who outlined that the response from Kilcoona National School in Headford was very positive. The Music Teacher in the Ursuline College in Sligo felt that the students really enjoyed the workshops and that they found Armoniosa very approachable and interesting to engage with.

## **Technical and Production Outcomes**

Robinson felt that his objectives in the area of technical and production values were very minimal in the first place and that they were reached such as they were. He had contact with promoters only in advance of the tour and at no time had contact with technical/production personnel.

The promoters had provided him with get-in times and details and in each venue, with the exception of the Aula Maxima in UCC, Cork, he was met by either the promoter or a representative.

In Clifden, the group were greeted by the Church of Ireland Vicar. The group themselves set up for the concert which was at lunchtime. Due to the time of day, they did not use stand lights and performed the natural light of the church.

The author attended the concert in Clifden which took place on a very bright day at the end of September. The church is a very pleasant and naturally intimate space with that sense of calm that inhabits most churches. The group's demeanour and dress were pleasant. They were subtly linked to each other by black and aubergine but not in any uniform way. They had certainly thought about their presentation and it showed. The concert took place in natural light. This, along with the space and the music made for a very pleasant atmosphere.

When Armoniosa arrived in Galway they were greeted by the Administrator of Music for Galway. She had already arranged for a podium to be set up in the area at the back of St Nicholas's Cathedral that both she and Robinson had already agreed would be the best place to perform. She had also arranged for free standing lights to be set up either side of the podium. As this was an evening concert in September, it was fully dark outside by the time that the concert started hence the only light in the cathedral was on

the performing area. The concert was difficult for the group from the start as one of the violin players – Anita Vedres – was very unwell. There was a further unforeseen technical glitch in that the heating broke down and there was no way of fixing it until the following morning. The lack of heat put further pressure on the performers as did it on the audience.

The author felt that the intimacy of the first concert in Clifden was not as apparent here which was a lot to do with the space and the fact that the acoustic caused the sound to swim and be very indistinct at times. All in all, this was not the most appropriate venue for the group. The concert programme was very long and the fact that the heating was broken made the experience more uncomfortable than previously. The group however did deliver their selection of works in a very spirited style and despite the challenges of the space and the temperature, sent people on their way feeling good.

Armoniosa's experience at University College Cork was very different to that of the previous 2 venues on tour. Even though Malachy had been in touch in advance there was nobody there to meet them when they arrived '*we had to forage around for ourselves*'. As they had performed there before, they knew where to go and they set up themselves. There were left very much to their own devices and did not have any person to look after anything they might need. This was a free concert so there was no box office set-up.

Robinson feels that the space that Armoniosa perform in at Airfield house suits the group very well in terms of size and in terms of acoustics. It has the kind of intimacy that the group seek in a venue. When Armoniosa arrived at Airfield House, they were met and looked after by the caretaker. Robinson pointed out that the administration Airfield changed during the planning period for the tour. The current Administrator came to meet them later on that afternoon.

When Armoniosa arrived at the Model and Niland Gallery in Sligo, they were met by a representative of the Festival who showed them to the venue and looked after any requirements they might have. They were looked after by a designated person who was attentive. The group were very enthusiastic when they saw that the walls of the Gallery sported Andy Warhol's 'Cow Wallpaper'. They welcomed the difference that this venue offered in terms of its modernity and were happy with the way the concert progressed.

The Sligo concert commenced at 5pm on a Saturday evening in late October just as it was getting dark outside. The concert took place in the upstairs gallery space against the backdrop of Warhol's 'Cow Wallpaper'. The author noted that the only light being employed at the beginning of the concert came from the musicians' stand lights. The room itself was lit by daylight that was slowly turning dark. As the concert progressed, the darkness in the gallery grew which lent itself to the intimacy of the concert. People, however, did have printed programmes that would have been difficult to

read throughout the first half of the concert. The gallery light was lifted for the second half of the concert, though not high enough to inhibit the intimacy that had been achieved. It was quite intriguing to hear the music of Locke, Purcell, Matteis and Muffat juxtaposed against the visual background of Warhol's blue and yellow cows from the early 1970s. The sense of intimacy was very much there. The acoustic was clear and direct and once again, the group connected with their audience with great ease.

Armoniosa were greeted by a representative of the Camphill Community when they arrived at Castalia Hall in Callan, Co Kilkenny. This wonderful wooden purpose built concert space is located approximately 3 miles from the town of Callan in the middle of the countryside. Arminiosa had performed here before and so they were very familiar with its size and acoustics which MR feels suited the group very well.

The author felt that experience at Castalia Hall was very special. The acoustic in this hall is clear and direct. There is a warmth about the space which is due primarily to the fact that it is constructed of wood. The performers were lit with white overhead lighting over the performance space; they also used stand lights. The audience was seated in a semicircle wrapped around the performers creating a cosy, informal and very pleasant scene for what was an unforgettable concert.

### **Financial, Management and Organizational outcomes**

Robinson outlined that the tour has come in slightly under budget overall. He did however outline areas in which costs came in either over or under what he had forecast. One of the elements differing from what was predicted is accommodation. Robinson says *'it (accommodation) has come in at almost half of what we budgeted'*. The group stayed in Clifden, Galway and Sligo but some of the accommodation was covered by the promoters. Clifden provided the group with accommodation for 2 nights but they actually had to stay for 3, so they had to pay for 1 night out of the budget. They had to pay for 2 night's accommodation in Galway, even though they had anticipated only being there for 1 night, as a car breakdown complicated matters. Even with the extra unforeseens, they still ended up paying less than just half of what had been budgeted for accommodation.

Robinson pointed out that in hindsight, he felt that the €50 accommodation allowance per person fell short of the mark. As the group is actually made up of 2 couples, he figured that it would be possible to get a double room for €100. He says *'if I was doing the budget again I would put the accommodation allowance up to €60 or €65 per person sharing'*.

Robinson also feels that he under budgeted when it came to flights - *'I had allowed for €720. In fact they came in at €930. Sometimes you can get really good flight deals but the tax and charges really push it up a lot. I allowed for*

*€120 per return flight ... that was counting on getting a very good deal, but you can't budget relying on a bargain; it ought to have been more like €150 per flight'. Robinson also points out that there were 2 extra flights included in the final figure that had not been budgeted for originally. 'There were 3 separate trips, one more than planned because of the advance education work in Sligo. The Model Art and Niland Gallery however covered the cost of these extra flights.*

When it comes to publicity material, Robinson outlines that he came in under budget on posters. *'I had budgeted for design to cost €500 and print to cost €600 and in fact I got the design and print for €750. This boils down to €150 for the design and €600 for the print.'* Malachy says that he kept the design costs down by essentially reusing the basic design for their first tour earlier on in the year though they changed the photograph.

The mileage ended up being a bit higher than budgeted because as Robinson points out *'logistically, we ended up having to take 2 cars to Galway and one of them broke down which made things complicated. We then had some unplanned train expenses which weren't allowed for in the budget.'* Robinson calculated the mileage at 45 cent per mile. This was based on the rate recommended by Music Network. He feels that for musicians who drive themselves to concerts all around the country, this rate is low. Robinson goes on to elaborate on this issue *'musicians can drive half way across the country and then do a concert. The concert is the important part and the bit you get paid for but the amount of time that you spend getting there (to the venue) might be a lot longer'*. He points out that musicians expect this. *'It's a weird thing about this job, you might spend 4 hours driving to Cork, do a concert and spend 4 hours returning to Dublin; it is only the 2 hours you spend on stage that you are actually getting paid for and the rest (the driving) is really hard work'*. Also, driving is fatiguing *'so you don't arrive in the best of shape if you have to play straight away'* he says. He doesn't know if having a driver and a van/ minibus would be the answer *'we are just not used to the hassle and logistics of organizing a driver and having to fix someone else's schedule'*. He says that the driver's accommodation and expenses would have to be allowed for in the budget. He continues *'I can't bring myself to see that it's worth trying to get a driver and minibus to do this when you are talking about such a small budget. I think we got a lot out of €20,000... 6 concerts and 11 hours of outreach... we reached a lot of people and all of it, as far as we're concerned, was of high quality. If you add a driver to that you are adding to the costs; it just doesn't seem worth it'*.

At this point he refers to the non-drivers in the group and points out the fact that they may prefer to be in a vehicle with a bit more space than an estate car with everything packed in.

Robinson points out that he is not convinced that management fee that he entered into the budget is realistic. He says *'I found it impossible to keep track of the hours that I was doing on the management end'*. He says that he calculated the management figure at €20 an hour for 30 hours (he spoke to

Music Network for advice on what he should charge per hour); €600 in total. He now feels that this rate is too low... *'I don't think that €20 is much of a rate. I know that my time is worth more than that'*. He also feels that he spent a lot more than 30 hours organizing the tour... *'I think double that would be no exaggeration'* he says and stresses the amount of work that needed to be done in terms of organizing the tour and the outreach work. He makes a comparison with his experience producing the first Armoniosa tour under the Music Network Performance and Touring Award. Malachy did not budget for administration at all in advance of this tour because *'it had never crossed my mind'*. Music Network did however allow him an amount of money - €100 per concert for 5 concerts - as he brought the tour in under budget. He outlines that the Music Network tour entailed a smaller amount of administration than this tour because there it was simply 5 performances taking place with the same period with no outreach element. Robinson did not include expenses relating to the management area in the tour budget.

This brings Robinson back to the issue of someone else managing the tour. He outlines that someone else, who is practised in organizing tours, would not have to think twice about costing their time and expenses. Robinson is used to costing his time as a musician, not as the producer of a tour. After the tour, it would be his choice not to continue producing tours *'I would rather be practising and performing ... it wouldn't make it easier for me if I was getting €100 an hour'*... he says that it is his time that is the issue. Robinson feels very much that the role that he has played as producer of this tour is very much a sideline to his central function of being a musician. He outlines that he has approached a few people to see if they would be interested in organizing some tours for Armoniosa. As a musician he *'has no great desire to get involved in the rest of it (producing tours) but if you want it to happen you have to do it. That's a question worth asking - is it a good thing for musicians to be encouraged into doing this sort of thing (tour management) for themselves? Encouraging is fine, but you could put it another way ... forced into it because of the absence of independent agencies? If there was someone to do the organizing, it would allow artists to get on with what they do well'*.

## Learning/Recommendations for the future

Robinson feels that taking on the triple role of performing, producing and managing the tour was a major challenge for him. He is first and foremost a performer and does not have all of the necessary expertise and skills to effectively produce and manage tours. He outlines that his lack of administrative and marketing expertise was a major draw-back and that he was learning as he went along. He feels that, as an artist, his time is better spent rehearsing and performing.

From the early stages of planning this tour, Robinson expressed the hope that Armoniosa would interest an agent in taking them on. At that early stage, he was finding the demands of being a performer, producer and manager difficult. Having gone through the experience of the tour, he feels more strongly about this and has made approaches to individuals to take them on. He feels that the best way that Armoniosa, and other ensembles like them, could be nurtured is with administrative support '*...no amount of money would compensate for the performer's inexperience in the area of administration*'. Had he administrative expertise supporting him on this tour he feels that important issues such as contracts and insurance would have been discussed and agreed from the outset.

Robinson's limited experience also led to the assumption that the promoters, because they were paying a guarantee, would be responsible for bringing in audiences. Robinson now feels that had he put more thought into marketing and worked more closely with local promoters on devising a joint marketing strategy for the tour, the concerts would have yielded bigger audiences. Working closely with the promoter to market concerts would be a definite priority if he were to produce any further tours for Armoniosa.

## Appendix

### Sligo

**Date:** 13 September

**School:** Sligo Grammar School – satellite project in advance of Early Music Festival

**Duration:** 90 minutes x 2 Total: 3hrs

**No. of participants:** 35/40

**Age groups:** 1st workshop – 13 to 15 year olds; 2nd workshop – 16/17 year olds.

**Comment:** The education programme started back on 13 September, long before the tour got underway. This was particularly requested by the organizers of Sligo Early Music Festival as a satellite project to fuel interest among students in a local baroque string orchestra.

### Clifden

**Date:** 28 September

**Schools:** Convent of Mercy Primary School Clifden (COM) and Clifden Community School (CCS)

**Duration:** 1 hour (in both schools) Total: 2hrs

**No. of participants:** 35 in COM/25 in CCS

**Age Group:** 11 – 12 year olds in COM/Transition year students in CCS

### Galway

**Date:** 1 October 2007

**School:** Kilcoona National School

**Duration:** 1 hour (in both schools) Total: 2hrs

**No. of participants:** 25 – 30 in each group

**Age groups:** Group1, 9 year olds/Group 2, 11 year olds

### Cork

**Date:** 5 October 2007

**School:** University College Cork – Masterclass

**Duration:** 1 hour

**No of participants:** 2

**Age profile:** 3rd level music students

**Comment:** Performance class targeted at 3rd level students including analysis of Armoniosa's proposed programme.

### Sligo

**Date:** 26 October 2007

**School:** Ursuline College, Sligo – 3 groups

**Duration:** 40 minutes (2 sessions); 1 hour (performance session) Total: 2.5 hrs

**No of participants:** 35 in 1st and 2nd workshops; 15 in performance group

**Age profile:** 1st workshop – 12/13 year olds; 2nd workshop – 14 to 17 year olds; Performance workshop – 13 to 17 year olds.

**Comment:** Armoniosa gave 2 short workshops to music students and afterwards did a performance workshop with 15 students who play instruments. The latter workshop involved participants playing several movements by Muffat with the group.