

In an attempt to demonstrate that for every success I have, there are usually a LOT more failures that nobody ever gets to hear about, I have decided to keep a 'Failure CV' from 2016 onwards. I might try and put all my past failures down on paper over time, but I have had so many failures in the past that it's hard to remember them all!

Cheryl Frances-Hoad: Failure CV



Me and a Berlin dustbin, matching perfectly

“Although the character of the music is not strikingly individual, the invention occasionally tends to strive for a depth of expression which it does not achieve...the by-the-yard lyrical writing does not wholly succeed in rising above the ordinary before the fascinating opening section reappears. The final Lento returns us to the composer’s so-so invention; the work ends slowly and quietly, without having made much of an impression in terms of feeling.” **Classical Source on my Sonatina for violin and piano** (without wanting to seem bitter, this is a pretty shoddy bit of prose, isn't it? *“Occasionally tends to strive?”* ha!)

“Almost hackneyed” **The Guardian**

“Hackneyed” **Bachtrack**

“Consistently overwrought” **The Telegraph**

“...failed to convince” **The Guardian**

“It soon became apparent, that we weren't there to enjoy ourselves; although, looking on the bright side it was free, yet I don't mind telling you that after 30 or so minutes I would have happily paid good money to escape the auditorium, and by the time the poorly constructed flat pack wardrobe came into play, I was hoping that I'd be struck down by deafness, and soon after, I found myself searching in vain for some sharp wit with which to slash my wrists...” A member of Bridlington Writers Group on *Amy's Last Dive*, my first full-length opera. (You really have love the alliteration in the last sentence....)

“I was thoroughly enjoying the Tallis Prom until this started. (I thought I should check on youtube that this is what it's supposed to sound like as I thought there might have been a problem with the BBC editing). A tribute to Tallis? More like spewing on his grave and calling it music.” **Quintin Harvey, YouTube, (on From the Beginning of the World)**

“Was the composer drunk?” **Youtuber on my Commuterland for solo piano**

2016

Arts Council England Grant – My first attempt at an Arts Council England grant, for a CD and outreach project failed. I have resubmitted and have my fingers crossed!

Garrick Charitable Trust – My application to this trust, for the same CD and outreach project also failed. Mind you my application didn't quite fit the guidelines, but I gave it a go anyway as I thought there might be a tiny chance! But there wasn't...

Fenton Arts Trust – another application for my CD and outreach project that failed. Never mind, I will get the cash together somehow!

Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society – I applied for a grant to record my latest song cycle for tenor and piano, but unfortunately it was unsuccessful.

Sound and Music Embedded Residency at ROLI – I applied for this job and got to the interview stage, but no further.

Sound and Music Embedded Residency BBC Radio 3 Composer in 3 - I applied for this job and got to the interview stage, but no further.

Streetwise Opera Composers in Residence – I applied for this job and didn't get to the interview stage.

Warwickshire Libraries Fusion Commission – I applied for this opportunity but didn't get to the interview stage.

Arts Council England Grant – My SECOND attempt at an Arts Council England grant, for a CD and outreach project failed. DAMN! I have resubmitted AGAIN, after improving the sections that failed (timetabling, PR). Fingers crossed for good news by Christmas! (NB – I got it, the 3rd time!)

2017

ISCM World Music Days, Vancouver – my piece (*From the Beginning of the World*) got down to the final shortlist of six for the UK (via Sound and Music) but didn't make it any further. Sod it, at least it means I'm not increasing my carbon footprint by flying out to Vancouver!

MATA Festival Call for Works – entered and got absolutely nowhere. Actually come to think of it I've entered this every year and never been selected...

My application for the Kaleidoscopes Call for Scores got nowhere.

2018

My application to the Women's Brass Conference Composition Competition in the US got nowhere.

I submitted an Arts Council England application FOUR times before I was awarded funding to help record my piano concerto (with Ivana Gavric and the Southbank Sinfonia).

I got some really crappy reviews for the World Premiere of *Last Man Standing* at the Barbican. I'm not pasting links here because I'm not THAT keen to share my failures, but you can find them

VERY easily (although, a clue: google “Frances-Hoad hackneyed”). Thank goodness it also got some glowing ones (see them on the *Last Man Standing* page of my website (accessed via the 'Soloists and Orchestra' link on my Works page) and marvel at how one can put a positive slant on things – it looks like the piece received universal adulation, doesn't it? Ha!

I have to admit I got really miserable about this for a few days and mainly just sat around and ate crisps for the duration...but then I managed to shake it off (although I have to say, this is still occasionally really getting to me (when I let it) at the time writing). I *know* that if one is going to put oneself out there, someone isn't going to like what you do, occasionally, and that's just life, but still...perhaps the best thing really is just not to read reviews...Crikey, it feels as if you really have to be so thick skinned as a composer!

On the plus side, I'm (sort of) glad I got some bad reviews because I've been really lucky with them in the past, and it's made me care a lot less about them. I generally care less about reviews now (I've been so guilty of obsessively Googling myself in the past, looking for any sort of recognition/things to buoy me up...sad but true...!)

My application to JAM's Call for scores got nowhere (actually, I've entered this most years and have never got anywhere).

My application to Sound and Music's *New Voices* scheme didn't get anywhere. I've never had any success with any Sound and Music opportunity actually, right back to the SPNM Calls for Scores which I never got selected for. Think they are a great organisation though!

2019

No current failures yet (at least from my point of view, I guess people who've come to my concerts may think otherwise...)



Bad reviews made me feel bad, but not *this* bad.