



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

It should be noted the views expressed in this evaluation are intended to represent, as far as possible, an objective aesthetic judgement. Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences.

Artist/Company: Anna Krzystek

Venue: Tramway

Title of Event : Trilogy – TEST (2005), STILL (2007) & FIGURE THIS (2009)

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: Wednesday 18 March 2009

Overall Rating: 5: Excellent

It is highly effective to see these three works performed as a suite. It allows the spectator an extended opportunity to become familiar with the lexicon of the choreographer's highly distinct vocabulary. Pleasantly, in a trilogy influenced by the act of waiting, there is a lot of sophisticated movement contained within these work. Juxtaposing tempos, sculptural stillnesses and tiny variations to the choreographer's signature movement vocabulary evolve the theme in each piece. The programme is enhanced by live accompaniment of an original sound-score.

Name: Jean Cameron

Date: Friday 08 May 2009

Specialist Advisor

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named above. It has been prepared by either a specialist Advisor, or an officer of the Scottish Arts Council, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work and to the management of the venue, if the venue is core funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The report will form evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework and be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council. It may also be used by the Joint Board to report on the overall performance of its funded organisations.

Evaluators should enter their rating under each section, explaining briefly their reason for the rating with reference to their comments under each section. Ratings should be given in accordance with the following:

- 1 - Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- 2 - Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.
- 3 - Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.
- 4 - Good** – well conceived and executed
- 5 - Excellent** – conceived and executed to a high standard

1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	<p>Vision and imagination of work - Quality of ideas, skills in execution; if you've seen the work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on the comparison.</p>	5	<p>TEST (2005) STILL (2007) FIGURE THIS (2009)</p> <p>form a triple bill following a choreographic enquiry into the premise of waiting. This presentation is a unique occasion and offers Scottish audiences an opportunity to be immersed in an evening length offering of Anna's choreographic work over the last 4 years. The evening succeeds by taking the audience on a journey that showcases the committed practice and signature movement vocabulary developed by this artist in recent years.</p> <p>Anna has a distinct choreographic style that she has consistently developed since she started making her own work in the late 1990s so it is easy to sense that the 2009 versions of TEST and STILL are likely to be very true to the originals. However the sheer physical effort of performing 3 pieces back to back is likely to result in slight variations to when each piece is performed individually.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	5	<p>The trilogy is billed as a commission from New Territories; however the commission seems to relate to the creation of the 2007 and 2009 pieces and the staging of the suite as a triple bill. FIGURE THIS is co-produced with Belgium agency Les Halles as part of EU funded initiative to profile Live Art internationally and has received additional support and funding generated directly by the choreographer from a range of partners including SAC, Dancebase, The Work Room, Balance, Dance House and CCA together with Helsinki based performance company Oblivia.</p> <p>Anna Krzystek is the only choreographer based in Scotland profiled in New Territories 09. Her work deservedly sits alongside international peers and it is highly appropriate to see the best of work being made in Scotland presented in the context of this internationally acclaimed festival.</p> <p>It is a treat to see a trilogy of recent and new work by a quality choreographer based in Scotland in an evening length programme...to be encouraged.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	5	<p>Each of the 3 works communicated the artist's aims (as stated in the programme) with great clarity. However I did feel that the new work -FIGURE THIS (2009) - does less to advance Anna's choreographic journey than the choreographic choices of TEST and STILL. This could be because I saw this latest work as the third part of the evening's programme rather than in isolation. The choreographic motifs in FIGURE THIS are consistent</p>

¹ Education is a bridge between artform excellence and increased access and participation, and it is people centred. Providing opportunities for learning and progressing in an artform or using an artform to address other, non-artistic, outcomes are equally valid; in either case a high quality strategic approach is required in order to benefit the participants and the organisation. Delivery can be through workshops, post/pre-show discussions, outreach work, etc aimed at any age group.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			<p>with and carried through from TEST and STILL rather than introducing us to new choreographic choices/ devices. It is important to say that FIGURE THIS succeeds in capturing Anna's extraordinary abilities as a performer and is a very satisfying companion piece to the earlier works in the programme.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	5	<p>Anna Krzystek is an extraordinary solo performer. The trilogy was performed with technical precision, clarity of intention, determination, physical strength, agility and grace. This suite of works evolved as an endurance piece for Anna for close to three hours. She carried this out with stamina, authenticity and a lightness of touch.</p> <p>She shows off her own choreography with exquisite precision and technique.</p> <p>Her performance in TEST highlighted here control and discipline as a performer. This was characterised by exact positioning, balances, strong extended limbs and sweeping movements and arches circling from her central torso and hips.</p> <p>Her technique in STILL continued to be fluid and elegant, with the effort of the demands of the performance frequently audible through her breathing. The effect of witnessing such endurance was to add emphasis to Anna's incredible stamina and grit as a performer.</p> <p>In general FIGURE THIS was performed with more looseness which could especially be seen in Anna's arms and hand movements. It is difficult to know to what extent this 'softer' performance quality was deliberate and would be present in a stand alone showing of FIGURE THIS or whether this was an effect of physical exertion during the final piece of an evening length programme. In this final piece, as we see her perspiration and feel her physical journey over the course of the evening, Anna's performance is compelling. The audience senses that whatever it is the performer has been waiting for is nigh approaching. The beauty of each sculptural movement has added emphasis in the final section of the trilogy.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	5	<p>It is excellent to see these three works performed as a suite. It allows the spectator an extended opportunity to become familiar with the lexicon of the choreographer's highly distinct vocabulary</p> <p>The choreography makes good use of different planes within the performance area, giving the spectator a series of repeatedly varied perspectives - of her movement vocabulary, of her physicality in performance.</p> <p>The choreography is rich in dynamic transitions between sculptural counter balances and pauses. Her aesthetic is minimalist and pure, making a particular feature of simple flourishes of limbs, twists of the hip or repeated rolling of her head. As a choreographer, she successfully creates motifs that suit her individuality as a performer.</p> <p>In TEST she introduces a playful use of tempo, rhythm and stillness to articulate the theme of 'waiting'. This device is used of great effect over the course of three</p>

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			<p>pieces.</p> <p>STILL uses repetition to advance and adapt movement vocabulary from the earlier work such as complex shapes, deep stretches, extended limbs, curls and twists.</p> <p>The choreography in FIGURE THIS is less sculptural than in previous two pieces. Understandably in the third piece of the evening, there is less change in momentum. Importantly this final piece succeeds in feeling like the culmination of choreographic ideas being explored throughout the trilogy.</p> <p>The choreography in FIGURE THIS has a more released feel than in the earlier works. At the same time, it retains a highly structured quality that is consistent with the first two works together with exquisite detailed foot work and sculptural forms.</p>
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	n/a	n/a
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	5	<p>Each of these three pieces feels surprisingly 'full' for works that are conceptually concerned with the act of waiting. Yet the staging is deliberately minimal. The choreographer combines these opposing elements well and creates a series of satisfying tensions over the duration of the trilogy.</p> <p>Watching her audience, in TEST, the performer uses direct eye contact to take command of the space. There are moments in each piece where she employs this device, taking time to 'eye up' the audience, of 'taking us in'. This gives weight to the waiting theme - who is waiting for who...the audience looking at the performer or the artist expectant of the audience response?</p> <p>STILL is devised as an absorbing performance installation in which the ambiguities of the wait are further blurred for the viewer as s/he engages with two different speeds and temporalities – the live performance and screen-based work.</p> <p>FIGURE THIS continues the themes of expectation: against a backdrop of pre-recorded applause, Anna stands with hands on hips peering at the audience. - what is she waiting for? Is the performer challenging her audience to be appreciative? Is this Anna or is it a character emerging? This piece is the one amongst the three which hints at a narrative that invites interpretation from the audience.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	5	<p>There is a long standing collaboration between composer Tom Murray and the choreographer which makes for an intuitive dialogue between sound and dance in each of the three works. The original sound-scores are mixed live, downstage, by composer Tom Murray. His compositions play an appropriate role throughout the trilogy. At different times the score brings a consistency that supports the choreography and at other moments it builds in volume to fill the space and</p>

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			<p>drive relentlessly the atmosphere of the piece.</p> <p>An intriguing mix of analogue sounds and electronic music are digitally mixed. Murray's rich layered textured collage of sound has its own patterns and dialogues with the choreography. Like the choreography, sequences are repeated and adapted over the course of the evening.</p> <p>In keeping with the theme of waiting, he uses sound to mark time incorporating both the tick of a metronome and ring of alarm clock into the score.</p> <p>In STILL, sound provides a constant relationship between what we see on screen and the performer's stillness and movements. And in FIGURE THIS he samples from what has gone before in the previous two pieces.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.</p>	3	<p>The design theme for all three pieces is classic black and white: simple yet sophisticated. This extends to the dancer's simple black tunic, the spartan stage dressing – functional chair and table. This no frills design underpins the directness of the artistic concept and lends a timelessness to the choreographic language.</p> <p>For the second piece - STILL – a number of video monitors are introduced to the stage furniture. These are laid out on the floor and create a gallery-like environment within the performance space. The effect is to support this piece which has been conceived as a performance – installation. The on-screen visuals are black and white continuing the monochrome theme.</p> <p>Appropriately, the films have been edited with choreographic sensitivity. Our attention is drawn to unusual angles, isolated parts of the body, slow motion, delayed playback and stillness. We see elements from the earlier production TEST incorporated into the film and get hints of what might yet come in the final piece of the trilogy.</p>
All	<p>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang</p> <p>Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>	5	<p>The production values of the work are high with seamless technical change-overs taking place in between each piece.</p> <p>An open white lighting state is constant throughout the trilogy. The effect of this is to create a studio like environment, aiding the audience sense that we are witnessing an intimate embodied practice (albeit performed on stage for public consumption).</p> <p>The lighting supports the conceptual theme of 'waiting' at points during the show. For example on entering the space for the first time, the light is up on the stage already and we experience the performer surveying us as we take our seats. Again over the course of the evening, the lights come up at points on the audience to highlight the performer's relationship to the spectator and give a sense of we're all in the 'waiting game' together.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	<p>Audience</p> <p>Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit</p> <p>Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc</p>		<p>There were approximately 70 in the audience for this evening length presentation. The audience seemed engaged in the entire work, with conversations during the intervals being very appreciative of each individual piece. This was an informed audience made up of many individuals with a professional interest in contemporary dance and performance including promoters from elsewhere in the UK and international artists performing at New Territories.</p>
All	<p>Additional Interpretative activity – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.</p>	3	<p>A Lecture Performance was organised by The Work Room in association with the choreographer on the weekend before the Tramway performance. FIGURE THIS had been made in association with The Work Room through a choreographic residency. The Lecture-Performance would have open only to members of The Work Room members, attended by professional dance community.</p> <p>I am not aware of any additional interpretive activity organised by the Festival for a wider public.</p>
All	<p>Outcomes of education activity – what learning/skills development took place? What did participants take away with them? Are education resources being provided for follow up work? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum (formal or informal)?</p>	n/a	<p>There was no educational activity for professionals or non professionals organised as part of the event, that I'm aware of.</p>

2. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and the venue, with reference to the checklist below, including additional comments/observations. Please try to view the venue and the services, and interpretative material as though you had never visited it before eg if you did not know the venue's location, how easy would it be to find your way there, and to find your way around once you had arrived?

Criteria	Comment
Suitability of the venue for the event	Highly suitable
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programmes outlined the conceptual précis of each work and a short biog of the choreographer with link to her website. There was no FOH display mounted by the Festival for this event.
Publicity/ pre-publicity – leaflets, posters, websites, etc. What is produced, is it easy to understand and where can you get the information? Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.	The programme was profiled in the New Territories season brochure available both in print and electronic format. I wasn't aware of any individual flyers or e-blasts produced by either the artist or Festival. The artist's website was informative and provided useful contextual information. Beyond listings info, there was no particular feature / contextual info about this artist on the Festival's website.
Ease of booking and payment	Tramway staff were professional and able to answer questions about ticket arrangements and running times for this evening length programme.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Tramway website and brochure give clear directions to venue by public transport.
External signage and signposting	Tramway signage on both Pollokshaws Rd and Albert Drive easily signpost the venue.
Internal directional signage	The audience were directed by FOH staff to Tramway 4 – the performance space for this event.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Tramway is fully accessible.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The start time of 6.30pm seemed convenient for people to arrive after work. The intervals were long enough for people to top up on refreshments. The show came down just before 9.30pm which felt just right for an evening length programme.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	FOH staff well informed about the running order of the pieces and various intervals during the evening.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC accreditation appeared on the individual performance programme, New Territories brochures and posters.

² In press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, company's website, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising, recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.) Where the event is publicised in the programme brochure of another organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

3. Organisation's Comments (optional)

This is the organisation's opportunity to respond to points raised within this assessment. Please do not feel obliged to fill this section in. In the spirit of the Quality Framework, we would ask that any comments are self-evaluating, providing an insight as to why, if there is, a major disagreement of response between the organisation and the evaluation, in a constructive way.

This will not alter the rating given by the assessment, but will allow the organisation the opportunity to give their opinion/feedback. The Scottish Arts Council reserves the right to edit comments if they are deemed to be libellous or defamatory.

As the Scottish Arts Council implements the Quality Framework internally, we intend to publish artistic evaluations on organisations that we support regularly on our website. The final artistic evaluation, including the organisation's response will be published on a quarterly basis on our website.

Please keep your response to max 500 words. If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.