



### 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:** Plan B – Frank McConnell and Ayumi Gallagher

**Venue:** Eden Court (Studio 2)

**Title of Event:** *New Beginnings*

**Type of Event:** Informal Sharing

**Date of Visit:** 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2009

**Overall Rating:** 5: Excellent

This informal sharing was the culmination of a 2 week professional development opportunity for an aspiring young choreographer. Four short (work in progress) dance pieces were shown, performed by 2 experienced contemporary dancers in a studio setting.

It was a pleasure to watch and listen to the feedback from a warm, appreciative audience, who were gently facilitated into giving their opinions on the work. In turn they were given some insights into the intimate and appropriately challenging process.

A well conceived project, executed with sensitivity and integrity. Clearly, this has been a valuable and reflective learning experience for the choreographer and mentor.

Name: Lee Fisher

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 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	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.	5	Broadly speaking - a generous but wholly worthwhile opportunity and process. This was a sharing of choreographic research and exploration of ideas – in many ways a continuation of the 2 week process - appropriate for a project that aims to support the development of a choreographer in the very early stages of her career.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.  If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.	5	My understanding is that this project was conceived by the mentor (who sought funding) and offered to the choreographer as a professional development opportunity. Project demonstrates continuity as the mentor and mentee have a professional relationship that stems from previous community dance work.
All	Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.  Education events – see <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	5	Clearly this project has been an effective learning process for the mentee. Specifically the development of her own 'choreographic style and approaches', including use of tasks to generate movement material and her 'articulation' as an artist.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.  Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	4	The choreographer was 'given' 2 mature dancers to work with. The presence of such clearly experienced and technically competent performers is another illustration of commitment and integrity towards the project.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	4	The sharing consisted of 4 short and dynamically varied dance pieces. Choreographically for me the pieces were an interesting exploration of status and relationship dynamics between the two dancers Some of the movement ideas/sequences were both aesthetically pleasing and challenging.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	N/A	
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	5	Very well presented – the context around the project was clear and informally stated. Audience responses were gently and skilfully facilitated. The 2 dancers involved were well chosen for their technical ability and experience and no doubt added much to the process beyond the performance.

<sup>1</sup> 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
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	5	One piece in silence but otherwise diverse choices including David Paul Jones and John Tavenor.
Dance, Theatre	Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.	4	Appropriate, simple but atmospheric lighting – no costume.
All	<p><b>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</b></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>Context for the sharing set well, audience clear about what they were seeing and where the performers/choreographer were 'coming from'.</p> <p>A truly Informal sharing that was warmly hosted.</p> <p>The audience were gently facilitated into giving their views on the work.</p>
All	<p><b>Audience</b></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>		About 20 people in the audience, they observed with interest and appreciation. They were open with their feedback and questions. The choreographic material as well as the host asked interesting questions of the audience.
All	<b>Additional Interpretative activity</b> – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.		See above.
All	<b>Outcomes of education activity</b> – 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)?	5	<p>The choreographer is exploring how the work might be developed further and whether or not it will be taken on to full production. She was passionate about the learning she has gained from the fortnight and stated: ' I feel that I am one step on my way to becoming a choreographer!'</p> <p>As listed earlier the choreographer's learning has been profound, however, it is also interesting and important to note the extent to which the mentor has reflected on his own practice as a result of this project.</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	Ideal, great dance facility, spacious studio – warm, well lit. Seats for visitors.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	None seen on this occasion.
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.	Event publicised on Plan B website. Plan B website easy to navigate. Organisation's activities and mission/vision clear.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A – free to enter.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Yes – easy to find and short walk from train station.
External signage and signposting	Clear and helpful.
Internal directional signage	Adequate
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Accessible toilets, ramps and automatic doors.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Duration of about an hour, absolutely appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent, friendly and informed.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Clearly visible and prominent branding on Plan B website.

<sup>2</sup> 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.