



## ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	Plan B
<b>Venue:</b>	The Lemon Tree
<b>Title of Event :</b>	A Wee Home From Home
<b>Type of Event:</b>	Dance Play
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	13 November 2009
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	Very Good

An innovative and imaginative production, in which the music, lyrics and dance are ingeniously and cohesively blended and interwoven to create a vivid and penetrating portrait of Glasgow.

Excellent performances by Frank McConnell and Michael Marra, who demonstrated a very strong partnership on stage, and were brilliant at communicating with, and engaging their audience. It was great to see Michael taking such a physical, as well as musical part in the performance.

The music was truly amazing, and completely integral to the production. It was fascinating to listen to the lyrics whilst watching Frank perform; collectively they created a rich tapestry of storytelling.

The set significantly limited the available performance space, and the choreography consequently had quite a repetitive flow around the space.

The pure contemporary sections were pleasing to watch, but I wonder why they were included? I found myself disengaging slightly from the piece, and my mind beginning to wander.

**Name:** Sara Schena

**Date:** 14/11/09

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 on 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 future 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:**

**Very poor**- standard falls well below what is acceptable.

**Poor** - not well conceived and executed

**Satisfactory**

**Good** - well conceived and executed

**Very Good** – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

**Excellent** – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of ideas</li> <li>if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p>Innovative and imaginative. The music, lyrics and dance are ingeniously and cohesively blended and interwoven, to create a vivid and penetrating portrait of Glasgow.</p> <p>Brilliant to see Michael Marra taking such a physical, as well as musical, part in the performance.</p> <p>Frank and Michael form a strong and successful partnership.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation?</li> <li>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</li> </ul>	Excellent	<p>Plan B's vision is "...to be an invaluable source of creativity in the Highlands through creating, producing and presenting original dance performances..."</p> <p>This show certainly matches the vision.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material?</li> <li>How well did it communicate the artistic themes?</li> <li>How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	Very Good	<p>I could find no stated aims of this particular show, although the programme does explain Plan B's commitment to "...a bold and imaginative style which is innovative in its devising and accessible in its delivery."</p> <p>This accurately describes 'A Wee Home From Home'. This innovative show boldly and creatively communicates the artistic themes, effectively using humour to draw in, and engage its audience.</p> <p>The show originated from Frank and Plan B, and has been developed from an idea about Frank's childhood in Glasgow. Frank and the Director, Gerry Mulgrew, were both brought up in Partick within yards of each other. This show emerged from an exploration of their own pasts.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments.</li> <li>How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience?</li> <li>In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>	Excellent	<p>Both performers were excellent in this show. Convincing, engaging, professional.</p> <p>The rapport between them was very strong. They were brilliant at communicating with, and engaging their audience.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the work original?</li> <li>How was the space used?</li> <li>How many dancers were there and how were they used?</li> <li>How long was the piece?</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p>The work was extremely original.</p> <p>The space was well used, although the set did significantly limit the available performance space, and the choreography consequently had quite a repetitive flow around the space.</p> <p>There was one dancer (Frank), but Michael performed on stage as well, both as musician and actor.</p>

<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
			<p>The piece was one hour and five minutes. The choreography was split between dramatic sections, which displayed different memories of Frank's childhood, and sections of pure contemporary dance. The dramatic sections were very cleverly and imaginatively choreographed, and continuously shifted moods between humorous and sinister. The pure contemporary sections were pleasing to watch, but I wonder why they were included? I found myself disengaging slightly from the piece, and my mind beginning to wander.</p>
Theatre	<b>Script</b> Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new work</li> <li>• second productions</li> <li>• classics where the original has been substantially changed</li> </ul>	Excellent	Original. Cohesively entwined with the dance and music to enrich and give extra depth to the performance.
Theatre, Dance	<b>Direction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the work well interpreted?</li> <li>• Was it well cast?</li> <li>• Was it well presented?</li> </ul>	Excellent	Very well cast. Very well presented.
Dance, Theatre	<b>Use of music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>• Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>	Excellent	The music was truly amazing, and completely integral to the production. Michael performed live on stage, playing piano, playing the set (percussion) and singing. It was fascinating to listen to his lyrics whilst watching Frank perform; collectively they created a rich tapestry of storytelling.
Dance, Theatre	<b>Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were the costumes, set and lighting?</li> <li>• How did it work in the venue?</li> <li>• Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>	Very Good	Costumes, set and lighting were very good. Worked well in the venue, although I wonder how it might benefit from being performed on a larger stage. Sometimes Frank's movement around the stage seemed slightly compromised by the set. Technically proficient.
All	<b>Quality of Public Engagement</b> Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience?</li> <li>• Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants?</li> <li>• Were you/ engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• What was their response?</li> <li>• Approximately how many people were there?</li> <li>• Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled?</li> <li>• Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many?</li> <li>• What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p>There is no mention of a particular target audience. The production was appropriate for the audience that attended.</p> <p>I was both engaged and inspired during most of the performance.</p> <p>The audience appeared to be engaged and inspired. They responded warmly and with great enthusiasm.</p> <p>There were approximately 110 people attending</p> <p>There was quite a mix of people in the audience – different ages and backgrounds. I didn't notice any disabled audience members.</p> <p>Promotional material contains no mention of any BSL/captioned/audio described performances during this tour.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were these targeted at specific age groups?</li> </ul> <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred?</li> <li>• What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix?</li> <li>• Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning &amp; Development</li> <li>• What learning/skills development took place?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the art produced by the participants?</li> <li>• Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project?</li> <li>• How were participants recruited?</li> <li>• Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</li> </ul> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		I am unaware of any supporting activities or materials

## 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
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it easy to find?</li> <li>• Is it on a main transport route?</li> <li>• Are the spaces clean?</li> <li>• What were the sight lines like?</li> <li>• How big was it?</li> </ul>	<p>Venue easy to find. On main transport route into Aberdeen. Spaces clean Sight lines good Medium scale venue</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event?</li> <li>• Is there information on the venue's website?</li> </ul>	<p>There were programmes available at the venue. There was information on Aberdeen box office website.</p>

Criteria	Comment																
<p><b>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in?</li> <li>• What publicity materials are produced?</li> <li>• Is it easy to understand?</li> <li>• Where can you get the information?</li> <li>• Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>?</li> </ul> <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>Websites - First 6 listed on a Google search were:- Plan B, Hi-Arts, The List, Eden Court, Dance Base, Fife Direct.</p> <p>The only printed publicity material I have seen is the programme handed out on the evening of the performance. This included information about Plan B, and brief biographies of the production team. Well designed, with a clear layout, and easy to understand.</p> <p>There is acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding.</p>																
<p><b>Ease of booking and payment</b></p>	<p>Adequate</p>																
<p><b>Timing of the event</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?</li> <li>• Was the length appropriate?</li> </ul>	<p>Start and finish times were appropriate. Length of performance was appropriate.</p>																
<p><b>Signage and signposting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the entrance clearly marked?</li> <li>• Is there clear internal directional signage?</li> <li>• Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops?</li> </ul>	<p>Entrance clearly marked.</p> <p>Internal directional signage is not particularly clear, but there was no confusion as staff were present to direct us to the studio theatre.</p> <p>There is no Braille signage. There is no signage for audio loops.</p>																
<p><b>Access and provision for disabled people</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event</li> </ul> <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue?</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 1171 1252 1697"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>No</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>No</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>No BSL/captioned/audio described performances at present, but the venue does have the capacity to offer these.</p>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No	Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	
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BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No														
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Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English															
<p><b>Customer service</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)</li> </ul>	<p>Staff were friendly and efficient. I saw a few members of staff helping some blind gentlemen out of the lift and into a meeting room; they were very supportive and conscientious, and communicated</p>																

<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.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="151 152 529 271">• If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?</li></ul>	clearly with those of us who needed to move out of their way.

### 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.