



Scottish **Arts** Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE**

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>Scottish Dance Theatre (SDT)</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>macrobert Stirling</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Interactive</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>Dance Performance</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>19 April 2007</b>
<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>Good</b>

**SDT's Interactive** is part of the companies Spring Tour and aimed at young people to introduce them to the process of dance. Interactive allows the company to perform extracts from their repertoire and show how the company works. Questions and answers are encouraged to 'unlocking the mystery of dance' allowing SDT to actively engage young people through this accessible format which they do so well.

Name: Patricia Eckersley Date: 26 / 4 / 2007

Specialist Advisor *Please circle the relevant title*

**. Artistic Assessment**

*Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, taking account of the following*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments and key reasons for rating</b>
Vision and imagination	Good	The concept of <b>Interactive</b> is to inform and educate young people into the workings of a dance company. This tested formula creates an active dialogue between performers and audience. This is dependent on good communication skills to demystify dance and demonstrate the inclusion of dance achieved by SDT.
Clarity of communication	Good	Prior to the performance the dancers gradually came on stage and began to warm-up. This resulted in quietening the audience and creating a sense of anticipation. Janet Smith, Artistic Director of SDT introduced the company and set the tone for a relaxed and informal exchange between audience and performers. She encouraged the audience to talk to their neighbour and ask questions of the dancers. This helped to break the ice with an instant

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
		<p>babble of chatter. When asked 'does anyone have any questions....' can result in a stony silence, (especially for young people who may never have been seen dance before or possibly been inside a theatre).</p> <p>The company should consider investing in a brief written description of the Interactive programme for teachers/audience which can generate more in-depth questioning of the choreographers/dancers. This possibly already exists but was not available at the performance.</p>
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	Good	<p>Good overall production. Did not glean too much information from SDT's website about Interactive but the basic information was there. More detailed website information on this specific Interactive project could expand workshop/audience numbers on this unique project given the collaboration between dancers and performers with disabilities. The work achieved by SDT in doing in this type of project will I hope continue.</p>

## 2. Strengths and Weakness

*Assess the strengths and weakness of the event with reference to the following:*

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Good	<p>The company presented extracts from three pieces; Vanessa Haske, Liv Lorent and Adam Benjamin. All very different in style. The message of 'Sorry for the Missiles' choreographed by Vanessa Haska seemed to puzzle the audience judging by the response to Janet's question of 'what do you think the dancers are doing? The response was 'are they drunk'.... and 'are they animals'.....</p> <p>Angles of Incidence choreographed by Adam Benjamin allowed the ensemble to physically and emotionally blend as one. The slow walking duet with Michael King was beautifully performed.</p>
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	Good	<p>So good to see 10 strong technical dancer's joined by the four guest performers. Each guest performer gave a revealing insight into their pathway to dance. Their personal stories clearly hit the mark given the discussion I had with some young people after the show. One girl said 'she never thought people could dance in a wheelchair'. Another said 'having limited physical movement or being in a wheelchair does not stop you from dancing and anybody can do dance.....'</p> <p>A clear message from SDT by undertaking this project that <b>yes</b> everyone can dance.</p>

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments and key reasons for rating</b>
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	There was limited discussion on why the choreographers used the music for each of the three pieces. This would have been helpful in building the bigger picture of the creative process. Possibly something which does happen at other Interactive sessions depending on questions raised by the audience.
Design – costume, set, lighting	Good	Janet explained why the choreographer Liv Lorent decided on the costume design for her piece 'Luxuria' which originated from an idea of parachutes. The soft flowing billowing dresses worn by the dancers depicted a wonderful sense of lightness and air. This was followed by an improvised piece from the dancers showing the effects created by stage lighting. The demonstration on lighting could have been a whole Interactive session on its own as it was so interesting.
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	Good	Good technical presentation.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Small attentive audience -quarter full. Only three boys in the audience. SDT missed a chance of reminding the audience of the evening performance at macrobert. I expect this would normally happen in conjunction with cheaper ticket prices linked to the Interactive project.

### **3. 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.*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comment and key reasons for rating</b>
Suitability of the venue for the event	Good	Pity the company performed for only one night.
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>1</sup>	Poor	No programme or written material on Interactive available at the performance, which would have been helpful.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>2</sup>	Competent	Did not expect to see pre-publicity other than website.
Ease of booking and payment	Good	Ticket obtained at box-office.
Location of venue	Good	SDT said not confident in attracting the student population into their performance in the evening at macrobert.

<sup>1</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., assessing the range, quality and clarity

<sup>2</sup> Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Please also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised. Comment on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comment and key reasons for rating</b>
External signage and signposting	Good	
Internal directional signage	Good	
Access and provision for disabled people	Good	The venue meets all the required standards.
Timing of the event	Good	Started at 1.30am with an interval.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good	Staff helpful. Told performance was sold out which was strange given the low numbers in the audience.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding	Good	SAC acknowledged on Spring tour details.

#### 4. 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.

Many thanks for some useful feedback which we've taken on board with own post tour evaluation of education. Just to respond on a couple of points:

We approach schools and colleges directly in collaboration with each venue, to promote and arrange **SDT Interactives** and so they are not targeted towards general members of the public. We have a dialogue with teachers and groups attending the theatre will already have had a workshop and been prepared for what they are coming to see. However individual members of the public do occasionally attend an interactive and the assessor's feedback around website/printed information/preparation is particularly interesting in that respect. We are currently having our website redesigned and will look to address this.

We were disappointed with the audience figure, particularly since the rest of our interactives were very well attended. Stirling is a key venue for us and we are working together with the venue to improve attendance on our next visit. We are confident through our own research, already undertaken, that this can be achieved.

Our own post-tour appraisal had a big thrust towards fun ways of eliciting participant/audience feedback. I think there'll be some good developments rolled out in next season's interactives.

Thanks,

Janet Smith  
Artistic Director