



Scottish **Arts** Council

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: Scottish Dance Theatre
Venue: Zoo Southside
Title of Event: Sorry about the Missiles
Type of Event: Dance performance
Date of Visit: 21 Aug 07, 5.00pm
Overall Rating: Excellent

This was a very strong interpretation of difficult subject matter addressed by the choreographer and dancers with skill and integrity. The result was a powerful and emotionally charged performance. The imagery it portrayed has stayed with me long since.

Name: Lee Fisher **Date:** 7/9/2007
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.	4	A brave choice of subject matter, simply but very effectively staged. The first time I saw this piece was in a large theatre. I found it even more powerful this time in the more intimate surroundings of Zoo Southside.
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	This piece, was commissioned by SDT and created by Vanessa Haska after winning the Peter Darrell Award. Very high quality Dance Theatre. A very valuable thought provoking addition to the dance programme at the Festival.
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 ¹ below for guidance	5	The piece intimately and successfully explored the horrors of war.
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	This piece was not about virtuoso technical displays. The dancers showed great performance skills and interpretation. They delivered the harrowing expressionist choreography with absolute conviction and appropriate energy.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	4	Intentionally I believe, the choreography is rough around the edges. However the sections are compiled and crafted with skill. It contains references to folk dance and very powerful imagery. 30 minutes long and for the most an ensemble piece with 10 dancers.
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 rehearsed and cast. The dancers showed a good understanding of, and true ownership over, the work.

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
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	5	The music which was a mix of Italian and Eastern European folk music. Very appropriate to the piece, it was well used by the choreographer. Effective and atmospheric sound effects added to the experience.
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.	5	Very minimal sets that are used well and their simplicity is powerful in itself. Costumes (1940's style) likewise simple but effective in setting the scene and allowing the dancers to move well.
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>	4	Might have benefited from some more control and subtlety with lighting. However this is likely to be limited in the venue. Stage management - lighting and sound cues were fine. The audio levels were also good.
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>		The auditorium was slightly over half full, which was disappointing. A slightly subdued reaction from the audience but this was appropriate and not surprising given the subject matter.
All	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.		N/A
All	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)?		N/A

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	The piece worked well in the intimate environment. See comments above about technical possibilities.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Photocopied programme gave the minimum amount of detail; casting, credits. No background information on the company, which I would have appreciated.
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.	SDT Website clearly articulates the companies mission and aim and gives extensive information regarding the activities of the company. I failed to notice any posters advertising this event at this year's Fringe festival.
Ease of booking and payment	Struggled for some time to book on line through fringe box office. Called hotline and was notified that website was having problems. Booked over the phone. Tickets followed shortly by post.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Location of venue quite central and on easy transport route.
External signage and signposting	Not well signposted but not difficult to find either.
Internal directional signage	Internal signage is makeshift but this is not a formal venue so that might be expected. Otherwise it was adequate.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	I noticed an external entrance for people with disabilities. Access to the main stage auditorium could be problematic for those with mobility difficulties with so many stairs to climb.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Performance started at 17.00 and lasted for just over 30 minutes. It was a great 'taster', I would have loved to have seen another short work programmed alongside it.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	The staff at Zoo Southside were efficient and friendly.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC were clearly acknowledged in the programme

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.

Re access to the mainstage at Zoo Southside – there is disabled access to the Main House auditorium via a lift.