



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: Theatre Royal, Glasgow
Title of Event: DEFINED (Spring 2008)
Type of Event: Performance
Date of Visit: 29 February 2008
Overall Rating: 4 - Good

This was a assured and well performed programme from Scottish Dance Theatre. Yet somehow nothing made me sit up and really pay attention – maybe as a triple bill it all felt on too similar an emotional or physical plane.

Name: David Williams Date: 05/03/2008

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	The programme spoke of three very distinct pieces – <i>Tenderhook</i> , <i>In the Middle of the Moment</i> and <i>DOG</i> . In some ways these were three distinctive works but overall they were also “flat” in the sense that nothing stood out for me – no emotional, physical, musical highs or lows.
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.	-	N/A
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	3	Continuing on from the point above, yes it was good quality programme of dance but I am not sure that the combination of the three pieces was entirely successful as a triple bill.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	5	There is no doubting the skill of the dancers and clearly Scottish Dance Theatre has come a long way in the ten years of Janet Smith's artistic direction.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	4	My personal opinion is that the bill was in the wrong order, but I presume that was in order to rest dancers, so understandable from that point of view. (I felt the last piece should have been in the middle, and it would have been better to end the evening with the first piece – simply in terms of mood).
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.	4	Well presented, professional and assured.

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.	3	Such a shame <i>In The Middle of the Moment</i> (a piece developed with live musicians) should have to be performed to recorded music. I thought the music to <i>Tenderhook</i> was excellent, and through the use of music added texture and variety to the work.
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.	3	The concept of the programme was a Black box show with lighting and minimal costumes. Minimalism doesn't sit too well in the Theatre Royal but then this is show touring a wide range of venues.
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	Professional and presented to a very high standard.
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>Good mixed audience in terms of age and gender.</p> <p>Only the Stalls and Circle had been sold (very sensible) and maybe 60% capacity (of the Stalls / Circle),</p> <p>I also attended the pre-performance talk given by Janet Smith – 20 people, again a good mix.</p> <p>JS is a good speaker but I think this would have benefited from a host to break it up a bit and facilitate questions.</p>
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.	-	<p>Pre-performance talk (free)</p> <p>I am not aware of anything else on offer in Glasgow</p>
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	Good – although Tramway might have worked better for the programme.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Free programme (good but repertoire printed in wrong order from what was on stage so took a bit of detective work...)
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.	I am now on Dundee Rep emailing service which is very good. I am not aware of seeing any posters before the event.
Ease of booking and payment	I refused to pay the ATG booking fee so I called in person to the TR box office – a very slow process even though I was the only person there... (very friendly, helpful staff member)
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Yes
External signage and signposting	Good enough
Internal directional signage	Very small /discreet
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Access is always an issue in a venue of this age.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Yes – 6.30 talk; 7.30 performance – over by 9.30
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Yes, all seemed in order. Staff I spoke to were all friendly and knowledgeable.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Yes – in 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.