



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: The Tolbooth

Venue: Stirling Tolbooth

Title of Event: Le weekend

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)

Experimental Music Festival

Date of Visit: 27 May 2007

Overall Rating: 4

(Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses. If the management of the event affects the overall enjoyment of the event, please comment, but the overall rating should be based on the artistic merit of the event.)

I enjoyed the film about Cornelius Cardew, Stephen Pastels dj sets and thought The Thing and Zu performance was brilliant, Negisa Ni Te were a bit ordinary and Justice Yeldhams set was worthless musically and possibly irresponsible.

Name: ___Paul Cardow_____

Date: 23 / __6 / __07__

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please circle the relevant title

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.	3	Interesting bill, particularly the performance and collaboration between Thing and Zu which was fantastic and felt like a one off.
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.		
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	As an experimental music festival , I don't think Le Weekend went far enough, Nagisa Ni Te were a fairly straight guitar pop act, the film about Cornelius Cardew, although about a very interesting figure in the avant garde world was not a new work. The Thing and Zu performance was great, but overall I felt the event tends to preach to the already converted and not enough is done to make the event appeal to members of the public who really would be experiencing something new.
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	Very good except Justice Yeldham.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc		
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.		
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.		

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.		
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.		
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	<p>Cornelius Cardew film was good but half of the audience had to sit on floor .</p> <p>Negisa Ni Te were good but not particularly experimental and as a pop act they not particularly slick or well rehearsed.</p> <p>Justice Yeldham’s performance was pointless and irresponsible and seemed to involve self harming with a piece of glass miked to various sound effects pedals, in my opinion musically worthless.</p> <p>The Thing and Zu was a very good performance which started with both bands doing individual pieces which joined seamlessly then coming together for a joint work. Entry price was worth this part of the show alone.</p>
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>About 80 – 90 people there.</p> <p>With the exception of the film screening, the rooms were fine. I think most people there enjoyed the show.</p>
All	<p>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>		<p>Between performance dj sets by Stephen Pastel were good and mixed classic accessible tracks and the more avant garde.</p> <p>There was a small record shop stocked by Monorail records which was also very suitable for the audience</p>
All	<p>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)?</p>		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	Very good, except for the lack of seating in cinema room. A very attractive venue.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Very good, very helpful staff, a lot of upcoming event info displayed, very good merchandising displays from the artists performing and other artists of a similar appeal.
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.	Good except that it can make the event seem slightly inaccessible to the general public. I feel that there should be a larger audience for these type of events.
Ease of booking and payment	There was a problem with seccxtra: if you enter the wrong number of tickets it would not allow you start again, the browser needs to be closed then start again from there. Also in the address field of the billing statement it will only accept exact info, including every space and coma, so they had to phone me back to verify my booking info. I was told this happens to most customers and was a time consuming process.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Fairly easy to locate - not on a main road but location was very scenic a positive feature of the venue.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Good, lots of toilets.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Ending could have been slightly sharper for trains to the nearest major cities.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very good, except the bar which was understaffed. Also the café was closed which seemed strange as it was an all day event and there wasn't enough time

Criteria	Comment
	between performances to go into town for food.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Lots

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.

I must say, as Artistic Director of the Tolbooth and curator of Le Weekend festival I welcome the constructive criticisms of your specialist advisor. I do appreciate the work of your advisors and think the assessment is fair. I also welcome the opportunity to respond.

It is unfortunate that your advisor could only attend one day of the festival, I understand why, but I feel it does not give a real reflection of the whole festival. I know that Tamsin Mendelsohn was here on the Saturday, which was great to enable her to get a chance to see what we were delivering.

The point made by Paul about the festival not delivering or reflecting the nature of its intend i.e. being an Experimental festival is something that my team and I, since taking over the festival, have grappled with and have discussed at length. Le Weekend has always been an event that looks at all areas of marginal and underground music (even these terms are unsatisfactory) and in that sense the term experimental is often used when possibly innovative or influential would be better. As it was the 10th festival I thought it was better to leave this as it was first established. There was experimental aspects to the festival with 3 new commissions not least the Sonic Bed_Scotland project and there always will be an experimental side to what the festival is about.

A band that I think Paul didn't quite appreciate the significance of their performance were Nagisa Ni te. Le Weekend has been at the forefront of developing knowledge and links to the Japanese underground pop and experimental scene. They are ostensibly a pop band but they set up in the 80s a very influential record label that was involved in setting up the experimental scene in Japan. This was their first ever show in Britain.

We are involved in many different ways in developing and widening the audience for the music but I take on board Paul's comments about how to get a wider audience and not just preach to the converted. I certainly do not see any music as some sort of elitist exercise.

The comments about Justin Yeldahm are interesting. Lucas the artist is a performance artist and is interested in the theatre of performance as well as the distorted sounds he can produce from primitive methods. There was nothing irresponsible about the staging of it we were prepared for any blood that might occur as this is an aspect of performing with glass that is hard to avoid. Our staff were fully briefed and organised for this performance ensuring no danger for public or performers would occur - all cuts are superficial and I am assured not intentional. Justin Yeldham's shows were sponsored by the Australian Arts Council whose recommendations I sought. However, I myself was a little disappointed by his show. I thought there would be more musicality to the performance. I totally respect Paul's views on this and take on board his critique.

Finally I would like to thank the Scottish Arts Council for their continued support of the festival.