

Updated March 2009



Scottish **Arts** Council

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.

Artist/Company:	Theatre Cryptic
Venue:	Traverse 1, Edinburgh
Title of Event :	Confined Human Condition. Two companion pieces, The Baghdad Monologue and Terror of Love.
Type of Event:	Music Theatre
Date of Visit:	25th September 2009
Overall Rating:	Excellent.
Both pieces were demanding in different ways, but really engaging and innovatively presented. Visually intoxicating. Well directed. Strong storytelling. The performances and design concepts were superb. Great art.	
Name: Hilary Brooks	Date: 26 th September 2009
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	Vision and imagination of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Exc.	Two highly imaginative works, The Baghdad Monologue and Terror of Love, each scored for solo voice and electronics, uniquely staged and with very high production values. The first piece dealing with intervention, set in Iraq, tells of a personal journey into grief; the second, a woman is confined to a chaise and enters a spiritual journey.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Exc.	A continuation of the aims of Theatre Cryptic to develop innovative visual staging of music through new technologies. A return to more intimately scaled work.
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	Exc.	Accompanying synopses, backgrounds to the works and composer notes in the programme were extremely detailed and informative. The two very distinct narratives were superbly communicated both visually and aurally. The composers, Alejandro Vinao and Phillip Neil Martin were commissioned by Theatre Cryptic.
All	Performers/tutors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did 	Exc.	Superb performances from Frances M Lynch in Baghdad Monologues and from Lore Lixenberg - a tour-de-force of vocal gymnastics in Terror of Love - well supported by erotic dancer Clare Roddick. The performers were totally engaging.

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
	<p>the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 		
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the work original? How was the space used? How many dancers were there and how were they used? How long was the piece? 	Exc.	<p>An entirely solo movement concept using silhouette and light boxes was really effective in the first work.</p> <p>In the second, the performance artist/dancer was totally integral to the narrative.</p> <p>First piece was 35 minutes The second was 40 minutes, with an interval around 20 minutes for a total scene change.</p>
Theatre	<p>Script</p> <p>Please comment on this for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new work second productions classics where the original has been substantially changed 	Exc.	<p>The Baghdad Monologue was inventively interpreted through spoken and sung word interplaying with many different source speeches from George W. Bush and the allied forces to atmospheric crowd sound-scapes. Terror of Love script was mainly sung or recorded spoken word by the performer forming both a narrative and a textural landscape.</p>
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the work well interpreted? Was it well cast? Was it well presented? 	Exc.	<p>Both works were superbly directed by Cathie Boyd, well cast and brilliantly presented.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? Is it live or recorded? 	Exc.	<p>Both productions had music at their core.</p> <p>Live spoken and sung narratives were delivered integrated with recorded music scores.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How were the costumes, set and lighting? How did it work in the venue? Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 	Exc.	<p>The design for both pieces was superb. Costumes by Theo Clinkard. Set by James Johnson. Lighting by Nich Smith.</p> <p>Remarkable cueing throughout both incredibly demanding pieces.</p>
All	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education</p> <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the production/event targeted at a particular 	Very Good	<p>Over 18's.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & 		<p>Yes.</p> <p>Mostly. The second piece was quite demanding.</p> <p>Quite positive.</p> <p>Around 130.</p> <p>Good age range, late teens to elderly. Culturally diverse.</p> <p>No</p> <p>After show discussion with the Director.</p> <p>No</p> <p>N/A</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project? Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?		

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
Location and suitability of the venue for the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it easy to find? • Is it on a main transport route? • Are the spaces clean? • What were the sight lines like? • How big was it? 	Yes Yes Yes Good in the first piece. Narrow use of mirrors in the second. Seats @ 170?
Information/ interpretive material at venue— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? • Is there information on the venue's website? 	Yes Yes
Publicity/ pre-publicity – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leaflets, posters, 	Theatre Cryptic and the Traverse websites.

Criteria	Comment																
<p>websites, did you see the event listed in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What publicity materials are produced? • Is it easy to understand? • Where can you get the information? • Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <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>Programmes.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes, logo in programmes and on websites.</p> <p>Theatre Cryptic's website is superb.</p>																
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>Online ticket centre was down but box office at the Traverse were helpful and efficient.</p>																
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? • Was the length appropriate? 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>																
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the entrance clearly marked? • Is there clear internal directional signage? • Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>																
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many BSL/captioned/audio 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="568 1574 823 1648"></th> <th data-bbox="823 1574 916 1648">Yes /No</th> <th data-bbox="916 1574 1166 1648"></th> <th data-bbox="1166 1574 1265 1648">Yes /No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="568 1648 823 1760">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="823 1648 916 1760">No</td> <td data-bbox="916 1648 1166 1760">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1648 1265 1760">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="568 1760 823 1839">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="823 1760 916 1839">No</td> <td data-bbox="916 1760 1166 1839">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1760 1265 1839">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="568 1839 823 1951">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="823 1839 916 1951">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="916 1839 1166 1951">Accessible marketing materials eg</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1839 1265 1951"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes /No		Yes /No	BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No	Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg	
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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.

Criteria	Comment			
<p>described performances are there at the venue?</p>			<p>website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</p>	
<p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) • If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	<p>Friendly and efficient.</p>			

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.

Cryptic did not commission Alejandro Vinao to write *The Baghdad Monologues*.