



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:	Fish & Game
Venue:	The Traverse Theatre
Title of Event:	Eilidh's Daily Ukulele Ceilidh
Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	Performance
Date of Visit:	3 November 2007
Overall Rating: (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.)	
Competent	
It was an enjoyable show, inventive and a very different theatre experience. There was the opportunity to make the piece more of a performance by using the theatre more imaginatively. It was very informal and felt like the same performance would fit into a pub, a club in the street. Because it did not use the space it didn't feel as accessible as it should, rather there was a sense that the whole piece had just arrived along with a section of the audience. Eilidh MacAskill is a really accomplished and interesting performer with a very distinctive approach to performance.	
Name: <i>Stephen Stenning</i>	Date: <i>13 December 2007</i>
<i>Specialist Advisor</i>	<i>Please circle the relevant title</i>

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.	Good	The piece is completely unlike anything else I've seen. Part cabaret performance, part photo journal, part novelty song act. It is incredibly informal in style and courageously simple in structure. It felt like a different approach to 'theatre'.
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.	Poor	Traverse Two was an ideal venue for it, but beyond that there wasn't much a sense of it being a part of a programme, initiative or policy. Rather from the Traverse's point of view it felt a bit like it having been slotted in to fill a gap. Within the performance itself, it was made clear how it came to be on and that it was an artist seeing an opportunity.
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	Competent	It is difficult to know what aims it should be judged against. On the website it states that the mission was to have some sort of ceilidh everyday to "Explore the notion of celebration and performance". The idea of putting a ceilidh into a totally different performing context was to some extent achieved – I'm not sure it really explored the notion of celebration and performance however.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Competent	Eilidh had a really impressive ability to make connection with and engage the audience and held the show together whilst apparently having a friendly chat with the audience. She delivered the songs well but sometimes allowed the sense of chaotic informality to become uncomfortable.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	N/A	It could not be said to be choreographed
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Competent	I doubt there was a script as such – rather the songs and slides provided a bit of a structure. There were moments when it needed thought about the shape. There was a spontaneous and responsive relationship between performer and audience.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Poor	Eilidh created a really strong rapport with the audience and worked with them and reacted to them well, but the moments when she appeared lost broke the spell. It felt that she needed a strong outside eye to give a solid through-line so that she could easily get back on track having seized an opportunity to improvise.

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.	Good	The songs really provided the highlights of the piece and each one seemed to have been worked well into the whole.
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.	Poor	There was a prominent costume change but on the whole it was not really designed at all. The lack of design and the lack of thought about the visual presentation did not add anything.
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>	Poor	There was a decision taken about how much the informality and spontaneity should be compromised to take advantage of a formal theatre space. They chose not to really make use of the resources provided by the Traverse and the result was that nothing was smooth and some elements were unnecessarily jerky and clumsy.
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 audience was reasonable for the style of show (around 50 or 60 I would say). They were very enthusiastic although some were clearly already converted before they came in. That said, I took my nine year old son who had absolutely no idea what to expect and he really enjoyed it and was talking about one of the songs for days afterwards.
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.	Competent	There was very little from the Traverse but the Fish & Game website was helpful and I think the informal ceilidh at the end should count as additional interpretive activity.
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	Not applicable

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	Once it was decided to take the performance to a formal theatre then the Traverse two was probably the ideal venue in terms of lay out and size anyway.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Nothing to speak of.
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.	Fish and Game's website was good and MySpace offered some more ways in to find out about the gig. Traverse website wasn't that helpful.
Ease of booking and payment	I booked on line and it was very easy
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	It is relatively easy to get to as it is very central and near to car parks and not far from either Haymarket or Waverley with good bus links up the Lothian Road.
External signage and signposting	I don't think there are many signs to it and I was asked for directions by a couple standing on the Lothian Road about 20m away. The construction work does not help.
Internal directional signage	Not very clear – small discreet signs. I had never been to Traverse 2 and was not sure where it was and was surprised that it wasn't more clearly marked.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	The lift is well sign posted as are the disabled toilets.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	It was at the right time.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Box office staff were helpful and efficient. FOH and bar staff were slow to assist and made me feel as if I should apologise for having brought a child into the theatre.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC were clearly acknowledged in various ways around the building.

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.