



## 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.**

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>Ankur Production's Community Ensemble</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>The Tron Theatre/ Changing House</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Love's Time's Beggar</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>Theatre</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May 2009</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<p>The Ankur Community Ensemble production, was subtitled 'Stories of Love, Loss and Longing', and these are exactly what they were; funny, deeply moving and bitter sweet brief encounters with the defining moments of personal pasts. Performed by a non-professional cast, who also co-wrote the piece, this was an intelligent, heartfelt and entertaining production and the questions surrounding its central premise - the choosing of one single defining memory- were continued by audiences, well after the curtain came down</p>	
<b>Name: Stewart Ennis</b>	<b>Date: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009</b>
<i>Specialist Advisor</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 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	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of ideas</li> <li>if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p><i>Love's Time's Beggar</i> has its origins in the shared discussions of group members on the subject of 'memory'. The show has also drawn from the poem <i>Hour</i> by Carol Anne Duffy and the Koreeda Hirokazu film <i>After Life</i> whose influences are also quite apparent. In its broad, robust and occasionally cabaret/ reality TV performance style there were also elements of Jerry Springer; The Opera, but the show in no way felt derivative. Indeed it was the personal/biographical feel of the show (whether the pieces were autobiographical or <i>not</i>) that made it so engaging, so charming and so moving</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation?</li> <li>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p>This production was created collaboratively over a period of 4 months with Cora Bissett and various members of the adult community ensemble. This is the last production to have arisen from Ankur's 'Quantum Leap' programme of theatre workshops. The quality of the work being produced through this initiative was apparent in the production, and the Ankur website suggests a strong commitment to building on the success of this kind of work.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material?</li> <li>How well did it communicate the artistic themes?</li> <li>How did the event originate e.g. from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	Very Good	<p>The show claims to be about 'Love, Loss and Longing' based on personal stories adapted and 'collectively moulded' by the members of the adult group members of the Ankur Community Ensemble. This followed a series of discussions on the subject of 'memories, and how we store them;' the complex stuff of the construction of personal identities, in fact. And this indeed is, in its own way, what was achieved here; funny, deeply moving and bitter sweet brief encounters with the defining moments of personal pasts. Though some of the performances were uneven (understandable from a non professional cast and limited rehearsal time) this was overall, an intelligent, heartfelt and entertaining production and the questions surrounding its central premise - the choosing of one single definitive memory- seemed to have been continued by audiences, (prompted by Ankur's own questionnaire) long after the curtain came down.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments.</li> <li>How successfully did the performer(s) communicate</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p>On the whole these performers, part of the Ankur Community Ensemble drawn together from the series of 'Quantum Leap' workshops, gave fully rounded, engaging and nuanced performances, both in their individual moments and as an ensemble. There were occasional moments when a performer's eye was not always on the ball, but</p>

<sup>1</sup> 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
	with and engage the audience? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>		generally the actors inhabited the stage well, and any small lapses in concentration and moments of self-consciousness were more than made up for by some brilliant ensemble and individual set pieces all of which, in the end, suggested a high level of skill and confidence.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the work original?</li> <li>How was the space used?</li> <li>How many dancers were there and how were they used?</li> <li>How long was the piece?</li> </ul>	N/A	
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new work</li> <li>second productions</li> <li>classics where the original has been substantially changed</li> </ul>	Good	There was some occasional flat footed dialogue which could have been ironed out and perhaps this would be the case in a longer run. However, for the most part the script was very effective, switching between a heightened theatrical fizzing wit and something more realistic, contemplative and poetic
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the work well interpreted?</li> <li>Was it well cast?</li> <li>Was it well presented?</li> </ul>	Very Good	Cora Bissett's direction showed a good use of space and with minimal resources created a subtle and effective atmosphere that was otherworldly and overtly theatrical. The use of back projection added greatly to this atmosphere and assisted in the interpretation of the piece. Casting seemed just right throughout, and the pace of the show varied appropriate in response to the range and nature of the stories being told
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>	Good	Harry Wilson's recorded sound design was important and effective, adding another layer of atmosphere to a piece whose mood was forever changing as each story unfolded
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How were the costumes, set and lighting?</li> <li>How did it work in the venue?</li> <li>Was it technically proficient? (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>	Good	The minimal set made good use of the small Changing House space, with the back projection adding greatly to the atmosphere and understanding of the piece. While elements of costume and set suggested a cheap cabaret, an appropriate ambiguity of 'place' was maintained throughout. Lighting was minimal but effective. Technically there did not appear to be any problems and seemed tailor made for this venue.
All	Quality of Public Engagement  Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the production targeted at a particular audience?</li> <li>Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants?</li> <li>Were you/ engaged/inspired?</li> <li>Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired?</li> <li>What was their response?</li> <li>Approximately how many people were there?</li> <li>Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled?</li> <li>Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the</li> </ul>	Excellent	The production seemed to be aimed at a general adult audience though there were a good number of young people in the audience from what appeared to be a broad cultural spectrum, as one would expect from an Ankur production. Both myself and the audience were engaged throughout and found the questions that they asked lingered on long after the show ended. A questionnaire handed out at the beginning encouraged me/the audience to engage with the themes and this worked well. BSL/captioning was not used on this particular night. This was a short run, only showing at the Tron. The Changing House appeared to be full.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>run/tour/? If so how many?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event e.g. workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info?</li> <li>• Were these targeted at specific age groups?</li> </ul> <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was it taught/led e.g. one to one, group, child centred?</li> <li>• What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix?</li> <li>• Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning &amp; Development</li> <li>• What learning/skills development took place?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the art produced by the participants?</li> <li>• Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project?</li> <li>• How were participants recruited?</li>   <li>• Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</li> </ul> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		

## 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								
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it easy to find?</li> <li>Is it on a main transport route?</li> <li>Are the spaces clean?</li> <li>What were the sight lines like?</li> <li>How big was it?</li> </ul>	<p>Venue easy to find and on a variety of transport routes. The space was clean and visibility seemed to be good from all angles.</p> <p>This is a small studio space.</p>								
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event?</li> <li>Is there information on the venue's website?</li> </ul>	<p>Programmes were informative and Tron website equally informative and easy to negotiate.</p>								
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in?</li> <li>What publicity materials are produced?</li> <li>Is it easy to understand?</li> <li>Where can you get the information?</li> <li>Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding<sup>2</sup>?</li> </ul> <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>SAC acknowledged where appropriate.</p> <p>Fliers were visible at venue.</p> <p>Ankur website full of useful information and easy to negotiate.</p>								
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>No problems</p>								
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?</li> <li>Was the length appropriate?</li> </ul>	<p>Start and finish time as stated and length appropriate.</p>								
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the entrance clearly marked?</li> <li>Is there clear internal directional signage?</li> <li>Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops?</li> </ul>	<p>Entrance marked with good usher assistance. Not aware of Braille signage but believe there was a sign for audio loop.</p>								
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event</li> </ul> <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/ No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>NO</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	NO	Audio description of performances	NO
	Yes/ No		Yes/ No						
BSL interpretation	NO	Audio description of performances	NO						

<sup>2</sup> 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			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue?</li> </ul>	Captioning	NO	Lift/ramp	YES
	Accessible toilets	YES	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	NO
<b>Customer service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)</li> <li>If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?</li> </ul>	Very good.			

**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.