



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: Vanishing Point

Venue: Traverse Theatre – Drill Hall venue

Title of Event: Subway

Type of Event: Performance (

Date of Visit: 24th August 2007

Overall Rating

Excellent

dys-to-pi-a n: an imaginary place where everything is as bad as it possibly can be, or a vision or description of such a place. I felt this vision was given as a serious possible future. So this key element makes the through line one I could identify with in a community where my post code and name is all I need to be pin pointed – and if I can't be pin pointed then I'm turned away or have to produce other keys – my mothers maiden name or just it's first two letters. So for me the basic thread in the piece is an important one – let's watch where the road we are on is leading us. But what was great about this show was it didn't de-rail us from human experiences and our understanding of humanity to take us there. The performances being created by two performers kept that essential 'craft work' of people to the fore in our minds – where a full company of performers would have weighed this show down too much and made it much harder to fly – and for us to fly and to laugh with it – albeit still harbouring the knowledge that this dystopian future may not be as far away as 2032.

Name: Alexandria Patience Date: 20 / 09 / 2007

Specialist Advisor Scottish Arts Council Officer *Please tick 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.	Excellent	A musical with humour, live music, interesting content and based within Scottish traditions of storytelling and executed with style and talent from Vanishing Point. Stylistically quite different from other Vanishing Point shows I've seen but has the same quality of vision.
All	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.	Good	I have no background information as to how this production was initiated or commissioned. A very good show to present as a part of the Traverse Fringe shows.
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	Excellent	
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Excellent	Rosalind Sydney was excellent in this show – all her roles were sharp and in focus with warm and humanity. Shifting from one character to another in one flow whether it was to Scruggs' Dad, old girlfriend, old woman on the street, whatever... Sandy Greirson had the less showy but very well shaped and warm character of Scruggs. Wonderfully engaging performances.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Good	Interesting use of movement with sequences being speeded up and physically moving us around the space into locations and changing the rhythm of the piece. This was used in a way to break mood, bring in humour and yet was part of the storyline.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	New script devised by the company. It was very interesting to have the script create so many roles for only 2 actors and especially to give the multiple role to the female and have Sandy Grierson remain the single character. Rosalind Sydney was very capable and the roles created allowed her an opportunity to really shine as a performer. The script is so strongly based in the Edinburgh area that it really created a sense of knowledge of the

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
			place which was a very good way to keep this dystopian futuristic environment still very real and human. It also allowed for the Edinburgh Fringe audience to feel very much a part of the show – since those from the area understood the ‘in-jokes – and for those of us not from Edinburgh, there are still relatively few theatre pieces which are created with a very specific Scottish location that it also engaged us but without being parochial since the music was so obviously not trad Scottish music.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	This piece was created by the company, 2 performers, dramaturged by Nicola McCartney and directed by Matthew Lenton. The only difficulty I have is in knowing where to write about the differing elements of the production since all elements are wrapped into one another. This show is, in its simplest terms, a piece of storytelling and is really well thought out and presented with the same kind of simplicity that allows us to get wrapped up in it completely. Well shaped in mood, colour and form on stage and a very enjoyable experience where we felt we were guided into something that was light and funny and Scottish but had resonances that gave it some weight.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	Fabulous to have live music on stage and for the music to be so good and driving and shading the action. There were small moments of the 7 musicians being drawn into the play which made it really quite fun.
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.	Good	This piece is fairly design ‘light’ but it is very well thought out and delivers a cohesive and interesting environment for a piece which flows from place to place with the turn of a word. The slight changes in the space were small keys which always added without taking up too much time or consciousness. I thought this was a very fine example of a design which did everything it needed to – with flair and a little magic – but didn’t need to push itself forward to get noticed. I would be interested to see how much of the set is used when it tours to The Lemon Tree – although the other tour locations of Tron and Lyric Hammersmith in London should cope fine.
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,</p>	Good	Technically fine with no obvious glitches. I had heard from someone in the queue that a friend of theirs had been to the show and had trouble hearing the text because the music was too overpowering but this was certainly not my experience.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.		
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>	XXX	Not quite a sold out house, but pretty well full and seemed to hold approximately 200. The audience seemed quite excited going in since Subway had been given a good review in the paper that day. Reaction was very positive – lots of small reactions throughout the show.
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>	N/A	Not aware of any
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	Not aware of any

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	Great - a tent located within the drill Hall. It had an alternative circus feel to the location with a front row of seats which had cut down legs to make them low enough for folk to see over them.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programme with all the company bios, contact info and a Coming Soon ad for the next show they are developing – I always feel it's good to link-up the public to the next venture. It shows planning and continuity – plus the upcoming show sounds very interesting. A co-production with NTS 'Little Otik' will open at the Citz in 2008.
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.	Lots of flyers and posters around, with a simple design but very eye catching.
Ease of booking and payment	Easy – purchased on-line through the Fringe web site while I was in Canada
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	It's in a busy Fringe location but my taxi driver didn't know where it was – I just got out and found it relatively easily.
External signage and signposting	Maybe not really easy to locate from signs but once on the street lots of people knew and directed me.
Internal directional signage	Guided along the way but very easy
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Seating spaces seemed to be allocated but I'm not sure where an accessible toilet was since the toilets I went to were fabulous trailer toilets but up some steps.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Fine
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good. Generally they are very helpful and informed. Just a point though - I did try to go to another of the Traverses shows which was also at the Drill Hall and they didn't mention when I bought my ticket that it wasn't actually at the Traverse and that meant I actually missed that show – since I didn't have time to get there.

Criteria	Comment
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Yes – acknowledged on all materials.

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.