



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:	Vanishing Point
Venue:	Traverse Drill Hall (Fringe venue)
Title of Event:	Subway
Type of Event:	performance
Date of Visit:	17/08/2007
Overall Rating:	Excellent Every part of this production was delivered to an excellent standard, with all elements being very well integrated. The piece was very imaginative with a strong physical/visual presence and captured the audience throughout.

Name: Jaine Lumsden			Date: 28/08/2007				
Specialist Advisor		Scottish Arts Council Officer		X		<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.	Excellent	<p>This had a very strong coherent and distinctive vision, which was apparent in every part of the production. As is usual with Vanishing Point's work all of the elements were extremely well integrated, especially the live musicians as part of the storytelling. The piece was very imaginative, with a strong physical/visual presence.</p> <p>The story combined an intimate journey of father/son reconciliation with an indictment of the erosion of communities and personal freedom by commercialism and bureaucracy.</p> <p>I have seen most of Vanishing Point's recent work which is typically of excellent quality. This production lived up to their usual standards.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	Good	<p>Artist led, co-production with the Tron, commissioned by the Lyric.. (Rating relates to Traverse Fringe programme, which had a good mixture of Scottish and non-Scottish work.)</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	Excellent	<p>“a dystopian musical adventure” “ambitious inventive theatre” “atmospheric, exciting and evocative theatre” “stunning live music, inventive visual theatre” (from show programme and Fringe programme.) These descriptions are entirely accurate.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	Excellent	<p>A compelling, physically precise performance from Sandy Grierson. Rosalind Sydney played multiple roles, switching gender and age with apparent ease. Both performers had excellent comic timing and interacted well with the audience and the musicians.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc		N/A see under direction

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
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Excellent	By the company with dramaturg Nicola McCartney. References to real places within scripts are often a lazy way of securing an audience’s engagement. However in this case it worked very well – the universality of the themes meant that it didn’t matter if you knew the places actually existed or not. The structure of the piece (a running commentary/monologue by the central character interspersed with dialogue) meant that the audience got direct access to his thoughts and feelings, which made the piece very accessible. There were some genuinely moving scenes as the father and son become reconciled, which were saved from sentimentality by the use of humour.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Matthew Lenton. Excellent integration of the musicians into the production as a physical presence on the stage – they became in effect the chorus. Good use of set and stage space – especially taking into account the sightline difficulties of the venue (seating almost on three sides.) The pace was fast, which suited the style of the script. There was a great variation of mood switching from very funny to very moving and back. The last scene where father and son are in the pub, reclaiming it for the local community by defying the smoking ban, is a good example of how the production made you want to laugh and cry simultaneously.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Excellent	Musical director Alasdair Macrae. Seven live Kosovan musicians (Ethno Classic Band) playing oud, guitar, drums, tarabuks, violin, cello, synthesizer. The music was not only a soundtrack but also part of the story – partly through the use of the musicians as stage performers (see under direction) but also as a force driving and explaining the central character’s journey. There was quite a variety of styles – from beautiful and haunting oud and violin to more upbeat pieces.
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.	Excellent	Set, lighting and costume by Kai Fischer. The lighting was atmospheric and well integrated. The set was relatively simple and versatile – proving different height areas. The costumes were appropriate for the characters (bearing in mind that one of the performers had to play multiple characters of both genders.)
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</p>	Good	Professionally presented. The rating reflects the fact that the show had live music and mikes, notorious for technical problems.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	one, 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>		Wide age range, nearly full. Extremely good reaction.
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
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	Suitable, although it would have been better if there had been slightly fewer seats (sightlines)
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Free programmes with company biog.s and a little information on the company and next production
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.	Posters, Fringe programme, Traverse festival programme, website.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A invitation
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Central (temporary Fringe venue.)
External signage and signposting	Adequate
Internal directional signage	Too small to need any
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Unsure
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Fine (Traverse operates rolling times for shows during the Fringe.)
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Friendly and efficient
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Acknowledged

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.