



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 Title of Event:

SUBWAY Type of Event: PERFORMANCE

Date of Visit: 17/08/07 Overall Rating:

EXCELLENT

This was a beautifully executed piece of theatre, at times resembling a studiously shambolic hip-hop opera. Direction, performance, music and design were all excellent, creating a wholly believable dystopian world that was, , dangerous, hilarious beautiful and extremely moving.

**Name: Stewart Ennis Date: 18/08/07
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 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	This was a beautifully executed piece of theatre, at times resembling a studiously shambolic hip-hop opera, with its hooded figure prowling the stage with hand held mics; music and text continuously informing the other throughout. The live musicians were incorporated into the narrative, adding enormously to the imagery and wit of the piece. The world of a subverted Edinburgh/Leith, (there is nothing parochial about this show) with its recorded messages, constant surveillance and the endless imposition of petty controls, captured well the dystopian world the company sought to create, bringing to mind the worlds of Philip K Dick and Yevgeny Zamyatin among others. At the same time it was also a very moving and at times hilarious exploration of reconciliation between father and son. In common with other Vanishing Point shows, it showed wonderfully creative use of space, and - particularly in this case-a refreshingly direct engagement with the audience.
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.	Excellent	This show is part of the Traverse Theatre's rich and varied Edinburgh Fringe Festival programme. It will later embark upon a Scottish tour. Subway is a co production with the Tron Theatre and has been commissioned by the Lyric Hammersmith, where it will play later in the year.
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 below for guidance	Excellent	The Vanishing Point web site describes Subway as “ a journey through a landscape a few years from now, a show about small acts of rebellion and where they lead.” This is what we get, and more besides.
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	Sandy Grierson and Rosalind Sydney both give immaculate, highly physical and precise performances. Grierson's engages the audience like a bar room storyteller while always maintaining a real sense of danger. Rosalind Sydney, using a handheld mic, and some subtle physical shifts, populates the piece with countless rich and memorable characters .

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	Choreography/Use of choreography -originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Excellent	The use of space is excellent throughout, with actors and musicians constantly weaving around each other, creating powerful images in a space that uses the absolute minimum of set and props.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Excellent	The text is credited to The Company, with Nicola McCartney as dramaturg. The text had a chandleresque, free wheeling, vibrancy which worked beautifully alongside the music, at times giving it the feeling of a hip hop opera. It felt open and spontaneous allowing an easy engagement with the audience.
Theatre, Dance	Direction -Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Mathew Lenton's direction is fast, furious and full of generosity and play. Using actors, musicians and a fantastic creative use of space, he creates a dark, hilarious and memorable world. Here he creates some moments of surreal and gritty beauty. Though it's easy to see why he looks to Jan Sjangmajer (the next show will be an adaptation of Little Otic)and Edward Gory for inspiration, this show is also quite his own. Credit should also be given to the performers involved in the devising of this show; part of the Vanishing Point process.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Excellent	The music played by members of the Kosovan Etno Classic Band and under the Musical Direction of Ali Macrae was outstanding. The seven musicians themselves were completely integrated into the whole performance, their presence crucial to the atmosphere of the piece, its narrative and its design. Sound generally played a crucial role in this piece with clever use of microphones throughout. Mathew Padden is credited with Sound Design.
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	Kai Fisher, a regular Vanishing Point designer was responsible for the design of set, lighting and costume. All of these elements worked very well within this venue. The set was minimal and very effective; well suited to a venue with a quick turnover of performances. Creative use of space was more important than filling it up with set.
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts -technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Excellent	All audio visual cues were spot on. Technically this show was of a high professional standard.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		The Drill Hall was almost full. The audience reaction was extremely enthusiastic throughout. One curtain call though there would doubtless have been more but for venue tight turnover.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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.	N/A	
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	

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	The drill hall was an perfect venue for this production.
Information/ interpretive material at venue -programmes, displays etc.	Both the Traverse brochure and the Vanishing Point programme were informative without ever being misleading.
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, flyers, brochures, all visible and the Vanishing Point Web and the Traverse Web were easy to negotiate.
Ease of booking and payment	Telephone booking was straightforward.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Directions easy to follow. On main bus route.
External signage and signposting	Venue visible enough.
Internal directional signage	Adequate.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Adequate.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good and appropriate.

Criteria	Comment
Customer service -quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good friendly front of house staff at Traverse and Drill Hall.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC logo on printed materials and web.

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.