



### 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:**

**Dance Base presents:  
Alan Lucien Oyen, X Factor Dance Company, Steinnun Ketilsdottir**

**Venue:** Dance Base, Edinburgh

**Title of Event :** A/A

**Type of Event:** *Dance*

**Date of Visit:** Friday 8 August 2008

**Overall Rating:** Three - Competent

**Name:** David Williams

**Date:** 11 August 2008

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.	2	Not seen any of these companies before.  I found the entire programme instantly forgettable. It was competent, routine, average. Nothing more, nothing less. I am distressed because I can't think of anything positive to say about the show.  I am struggling to say something constructive – I feel that the separate elements of music, words, movement, should become greater than the sum of its parts – but I never felt that. Maybe it was a tired Friday night performance after a heavy first week?
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.	2	It was billed as "Dance Base presents..."  Apart from the old clichés of "love and death" nothing really held this together as a triple bill (not that that really matters) and having looked again at the brochure I have no idea how it fitted into the Dance Base Festival programme (again not that it has to in a structured way).
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 <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	2	For one who did not enjoy the programme the brochure entries used "purple prose" to over state their case... "compelling and haunting" (Unspoken) "delicate and beautiful" (In Time...) Beyond that, the brochure and programme were simple and straightforward, minimalist even.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.  Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	4	The dancers were all good in that they clearly could dance – they just did nothing special, nothing to excite or engage the audience.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	2	All the moves looked clichéd and derivative – nothing, not one move all evening made me sit up and take note that here was something a bit different
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	2	Again, the direction felt lacking. Tired – too tired to go beyond the tried and tested. Maybe the problem was people directing themselves – no objectivity... Since writing this I have read a 4* review in a paper, but frankly I just don't see it – I found the issues interpreted in a very bland way and I definitely wasn't ever reaching for my hankie...

<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
			<p>To be more precise I found “Crazy in love...” was pleasant enough, but really a ten minute piece extended too far – interesting perhaps, at a stretch, but certainly not profound as the programme blurb seemed to be suggesting.</p> <p>“Unspoken” looked so clichéd it could have been a parody of a “Marcel Marceau Workshop”. However I loved Betty the Medium – the best bit of the evening.</p> <p>“In Time...” was bewildering – I can see from the brochure that it won a prize; I can read that people find it “exquisite” but I am afraid it really made no connection for me – the dance didn’t reflect the prose and it didn’t add to the prose – so all I saw was two people moving around reading from a diary so the movement became a distraction from beautiful prose.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	2	To be completely honest I can’t remember. There was a “Soundscape” in the X Factor piece, but I didn’t feel it “added” anything to the rather clichéd movement
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.	3	Minimal – some lovely lighting effects in X Factor (Unspoken).
All	<p><b>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</b></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>	4	All perfectly good – nothing complicated though...
All	<p><b>Audience</b></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>		<p>Perfectly suitable for all ages – something like 30 people. Several of whom were clearly friends/family...</p> <p>Received politely... (clapping not enthusiastic, just polite)</p>

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.		Not aware of anything
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)?		Not aware of anything

## 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	Fine...
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programme – nothing much to be said – basic information...
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.	The actual brochure announcing the Festival season was good and imaginative. Website good as well
Ease of booking and payment	Easy and very lovely person on phone (Leigh, I think it was – very personable, friendly and professional)
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easy, well known...
External signage and signposting	Good
Internal directional signage	Good
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Good
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Yes

<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.

**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.