



### 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:** MacRobert Youth Dance Company  
**Venue:** MacRobert Arts Centre, Stirling  
**Title of Event:** the adoption papers (based on story by Jackie Kay)  
**Type of Event:** Performance  
**Date of Visit:** Friday 22 June 2007  
**Overall Rating:** Good

The production was a refreshing change to see from a Youth Dance Company. The work was mature and professionally conveyed. The collaboration was between dance and drama, which was an effective partnership. The piece was original and imaginative.

Name: Emma Jones Date: 30/07/07

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	I have not seen this Youth Dance company before and was impressed by their professional standard. The choreographers, Kirsty Wallace and Marcus Roche, had based the production on the adoption papers by Jackie Kay. The material was of a mature level for the young people but they delivered it with style, professionalism and it was original in the ideas used. The production was a collaboration with dance and drama, using Contemporary dance. Refreshing and unusual subject matter.
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.	Good	The MacRobert Art Centre run their own youth dance company, this was their performance, as it details in the programme, 'this is the first project that MYDC have taken on that has not been routine based...'. No other information was given.
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	Excellent	The group and the choreographers did an excellent job in conveying the productions themes. The programme notes detail, 'An adopted black girl searches for her past identity while the adopted white mother tries to come to terms with the shame of giving her daughter away.'  The theme was very clear and the production used a mix of music, dance and drama to strengthen that communication to the audience.
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	The performers were from a youth dance company and were not professionally trained. The space that the performers had was quite small and yet they managed perfectly. Their performance skills were a high standard and they kept in character, seemed well rehearsed and didn't show any embarrassment at any of the adult themes.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Good	The stage space was very small and I did feel it might have affected the energy of certain parts of the piece. Seventeen young people were involved in the production and the piece lasted for approximately one hour. It was very refreshing to see a youth dance company using and enjoying Contemporary dance. The moves were free flowing full body actions and gestural

<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
			movements.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	Although this was collaboration between dance and drama, there was very little script used, as the drama used was more 'situational' drama. This worked effectively.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	Presentation was excellent in terms of the presentation/performance skills of the young people. Three people were selected to play the main roles and lived up to the demand of such a position.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Good	The music used throughout was recorded but this felt appropriate. The music used was a combination of tunes that the young people / audience might have heard of. This helped to add depth or energy to a section.
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.	Competent	The young people were dressed in black costumes with the main characters wearing different coloured tops. This neither added nor detracted from the performance. A blanket and a letter were used as props.
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, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>	Good	The technical presentation was good. No mistakes were made with lighting or music cues.
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>		The audience seemed to be made up of parents/family and friends. It looked sold out with approximately 70 in the audience. They responded really well to the production.

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	N/A. No other activities were provided to enhance the experience.
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)?	Good	<p>The young people performing I'm sure had the opportunity to develop their confidence and self-esteem. They would have gained knowledge about the emotional context of having a child at a young age and the issues relating to adoption.</p> <p>No follow up work and no link to the curriculum, purely a performance project.</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?*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Suitability of the venue for the event	Very suitable, warm and welcoming.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	A programme was given to me before the 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.	I saw no posters advertising the event, only the programme notes. The MacRobert has a website, which is very comprehensive and advertised this event.
Ease of booking and payment	Very easy, I booked and paid over the phone.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	It is easy to find and well sign -posted.
External signage and signposting	Yes.
Internal directional signage	No signage but there were staff available to direct people to the appropriate space.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Full disabled access.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Perfect. It started at 7.45pm, had no interval and finished at about 8.30pm. Not too late for a family audience and no break for people to wonder off and not come back.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very high standard, professional and efficient.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	No, not on the programme notes.

<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.