



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company: Scottish Dance Theatre
Venue: Macrobert Arts Centre
Type of Event: Workshop
Date of Visit: Wednesday 29th April 2009
Overall Rating: Good

The workshop, run by Scottish Dance Theatre (SDT) and hosted by the Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling formed part of the visit by SDT to Stirling. It was led by SDT's Dance Agent for Change, Caroline Bowditch and was specifically aimed at encouraging better a understanding of the issues regarding the process of dance and disability integration. The workshop ran for just over one and half hours and was attended by a wide range of professional people. Eight attendees working in the area of PE and dance were present representing organisations such as the Wheelchair Dance Association, local school P.E./dance teachers and community dance workers from Falkirk and Stirlingshire.

The workshop had three sections:

1. An introduction from Caroline Bowditch about the aim of the workshop and her post followed by introductions from participants about the challenges of working with dance and disability;
2. A practical session working with opening up the body;
3. Feedback and discussion on application of skills and information covered in workshop.

Caroline Bowditch is currently mid way through a two year contract with SDT and is charged with a wide remit of working as a performer and teacher in the challenging area of dance and disability within the community, the education sector at tertiary, secondary and primary levels.

Name: Sally Hobson

Date: 30th April 2009

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 on 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 future 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:

Very poor- standard falls well below what is acceptable.

Poor - not well conceived and executed

Satisfactory

Good - well conceived and executed

Very Good – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

Excellent – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Good	This assessor has not seen SDT workshops before. The idea of operating a role such as Agent for Change seemed to receive a warm response from the eight individuals attending the workshop. There is evidence of a need for such a development within the sector.
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Good	<p><i>“SDT’s Dance Agent for Change, Caroline Bowditch is working to break new ground for dance and disability with inclusion at the forefront. The aim is to increase the number of disabled people involved in dance in Scotland, including those entering training or the dance profession. Caroline is developing and coordinating an inclusive creative learning programme which educates, inspires, informs and expands horizons. This SAC Lottery funded role also actively looks at research and developments to strengthen and support Scotland’s performing arts and disability network.”</i></p> <p>The workshop fits well within the vision of the Creative Learning section of SDT’s aims and objectives. The research and development aspect of the aims resonate as the primary outcomes of the workshop undertaken in Stirling. The discussion between participants and Caroline, whilst informing and introducing local professionals to SDT’s work was to reveal that there is a lack of support for dance and disability, both in the radical artistic and practical senses.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	Satisfactory	<p>The workshop delivered an interesting and well thought-out package of the role of SDT Dance Agent for Change over two years. The practical bodywork was interesting and well executed for all, and the final discussion was an important opportunity for exploring realities and outcomes.</p> <p>Participants expressed many difficulties and challenges to be overcome in the delivery of dance within a disability context. Caroline Bowditch did acknowledge that the workshop can only scratch at the surface of these problems.</p>

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
All	Performers/tutors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. • How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? • In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Very good	<p>The tutor is very upbeat, intelligent and thoughtful in her approach. Her embodiment, as a successful disabled performer and teacher is the most striking and elementally important aspect of the delivery of the workshop. Only at one point did her enthusiasm flag - during the final discussion when the participants expressed the obstacles they faced in their daily lives. These daily difficulties are somewhat overwhelming. In response the tutor suggested more practical input to support the work of the teachers in the schools. It was universally that one of the biggest problems expressed by participants is restriction of freedom in schools/community groups due in part to a prevalent culture of risk assessments and the “no-touch” rule.</p> <p>The radical and inspirational message struggled to take hold in the face of such powerful restrictions.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work original? • How was the space used? • How many dancers were there and how were they used? • How long was the piece? 	Satisfactory	The workshop explored warm up exercises and did not look at choreography except as part of the discussion on how a disabled person can use a particular kind of choreographic intention to explore and adapt able bodied working methods.
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 	N/A	
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	N/A	
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	Satisfactory	Pre-recorded music used to purely support the body work section of the workshop.
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 	N/A	
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural 	Good	<p>The event was aimed at the appropriate professionals and the quality of engagement was high. There was a sense of wanting to introduce inspiration alongside the realities of the difficulties of introducing dance within the disabled community.</p> <p>There were eight attendees: Falkirk school teacher - PE Dance assistance from MacRobert Alloa teacher - dance/core PE Probationary teacher Local PE teacher</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>diversity or disabled?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project? <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		<p>Falkirk Ballroom dance teacher Wheelchair Dance Association Local PE dance teacher</p> <p>Good range of relevant published and printed handouts available.</p> <p>Caroline Focused on the artistic element of inspiration – all of which is to encourage possibilities within the local contexts. The problems presented by the participants led to discussion on practical support and how that might be made available in the future should funding and the post continue.</p> <p>Participants requested more practical hands-on support.</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?

Criteria	Comment
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it easy to find? • Is it on a main transport route? • Are the spaces clean? • What were the sight lines like? • How big was it? 	<p>Macrobert is located on the outskirts of Stirling. Served reasonably well by buses, taxis and trains. The venue is suitable for this kind of workshop given the nature of its programme and education profile. The workshop space was clean, light and well ventilated. The café areas and public toilets were not particularly clean.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? • Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>An SDT publicity “pop-up” was on display in the foyer upon entering the Macrobert. No other public material was available since the workshop was below the threshold. Current information about dance and disability was distributed at the workshop.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? • What publicity materials are produced? • Is it easy to understand? • Where can you get the information? • Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>Participants in the workshop were invited through local authority / schools networks.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? • Was the length appropriate? 	<p>OK</p>
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the entrance clearly marked? • Is there clear internal directional signage? • Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	<p>All is clear</p>

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.

<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>No n/a</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>No n/a</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>No n/a</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>yes</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td>No n/a</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	No n/a	Audio description of performances	No n/a	Captioning	No n/a	Lift/ramp	yes	Accessible toilets	yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	No n/a
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<p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	<p>Good. Apart from the workshop leader who was very self-contained there were no disabled participants in the workshop.</p>																

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.