



Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE**

**Artist/Company: Sasha Waltz & Guests**

**Venue: The Edinburgh Playhouse**

**Title of Event: “Impromptus”**

**Type of Event: Performance**

**Date of Visit: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005**

**Overall Rating : GOOD**

This was one of the dance highlights of this years International Festival for me, a beautiful, large scale dance performance that was measures and assured in ist use of movement sound and staging. However, it failed to surprise and move me emotionally in any way that would mark it out as a great dance experience.

**Name: Steve Slater**

**Date: 19 / 08 / 05**

**Specialist Advisor X**

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*Please circle the relevant title*

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named below. 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 may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will 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 Council to report on the overall performance of its Core 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.

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## 1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, taking account of the following

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Vision and imagination	Good	Sasha Waltz's "Impromptus" was a satisfying example of her choreography, showing her ability to manipulate the stage with complex movement that was both playful and beautiful to experience.
Clarity of communication	Good	Waltz's movement vocabulary is very accessible and viewer friendly. Her dancers move across the stage as elements in a much larger picture – almost a landscape - her visual skills making the stage seem like a canvas on which she literally paints the movement.
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	Good	As a major element in the International Festivals programme "Impromptus" was a fitting addition. It's scale and technical virtuosity is what we have come to expect from the main stage at the festival. My only disappointment is that it was exactly what is expected of the International Festival, and I would have enjoyed being taken by surprise by a work that set out to "break the rules" at some point!

## 2. Strengths and Weakness

Assess the strengths and weakness of the event with reference to the following:

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Excellent	As mentioned above, this performance for me was all about space – movement through it and over it – the stage, consisting of three large overlapping planes was very pleasing in its simplicity. I enjoyed how the seven dancers negotiated this space, moving over the fractured landscape like polar explorers.
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	Excellent	The dancers and the musician and singer all worked well together. As a company they clearly understand and enjoy working with each other. No one dancer stood out for me – if anything they worked very much as part of the whole experience – like characters in a painting.
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Excellent	The music by Schubert – played live on piano by Cristina Marton with mezzo-soprano Judith Simonis provided the perfect accompaniment to the movement and the stage set – sparse, clear as crystal sounds that ran through the piece like water (or paint). Beautiful.
Design – costume, set, lighting	Excellent	For me, the set was as important as the movement upon it. It very much set the tone of the piece and framed the viewer's emotions as well as providing the dancers with a platform on which to dance. Costume was subdued and fairly minimal – like the set.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments and key reasons for rating</b>
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	Excellent	The sound and lighting were very harmonious to the piece as a whole. Sasha Waltz is an artist for whom the individual elements in the entire production are colours to be mixed in the creation of her work.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	There were no real surprises here, this was a major show at the festival and the crowd were out in force. There reaction was very appreciative on the whole, and I only counted five people leaving the auditorium when a couple of the dancers took their cloths off (shock horror!)

### 3. 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.*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comment and key reasons for rating</b>
Suitability of the venue for the event	Good	“Impromptus” is a big show and requires a large stage – it felt “right” at the Playhouse although the seating is not so good – I spent most of the show leaning out into the isle so that I could get a good look at the stage, and not the back of the persons head in the seat in front.
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>1</sup>	Good	Good programme notes were available in the Foyer (at £2.50), which I always feel, is a bit of a cheek when you’ve paid for an expensive ticket.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>2</sup>	Good	Prominent coverage as part of the International Festival – as is to be expected.
Ease of booking and payment	Good	I booked over the phone – but for some reason I had to pick my ticket up from the Hub – which involved cueing for about 20 minutes. Other than that there were no problems.
Location of venue	Good	An easy walk from Edinburgh Station
External signage and signposting	Good	The Playhouse is one of the main venues in the Festival and as such has good coverage.
Internal directional signage	Good	There was no problem finding my seat – staff were very helpful.
Access and provision for disabled people	Good	I did not notice a lift but assume the Playhouse has one – there are spaces provided for wheelchair users.
Timing of the event	Good	A typical start time of 8.00pm made for a pleasant evening out.

<sup>1</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., assessing the range, quality and clarity

<sup>2</sup> Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Please also view and comment on the company’s website where one is advertised. Comment on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comment and key reasons for rating</b>
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good	Staff were well trained and helpful
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>3</sup>	Good	SAC are highlighted in the programme as a major supporter of the International Festival.

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<sup>3</sup> The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:

“The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.”

Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.