



Scottish **Arts** Council

## ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

**Artist/company:** Michael Clark Dance Company at New Territories (New Moves International)

**Venue:** Theatre Royal, Glasgow

**Title of Event:** Oh My Goddess

**Type of Event:** (*e.g. performance, informal showing, work-in-progress, etc*) performance

**Date of Visit:** 4 March 2004

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:**

**Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.

**Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.

**Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.

**Good** – well conceived and executed

**Excellent** – conceived and executed to a high standard.

1. **Artistic Assessment** - please evaluate the **artistic quality** of the event taking account of the following:

1.1 **Vision and imagination**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Michael Clark has returned to form with a dynamic, visceral, full-on programme. His quintessential style and choreographic language is there, but with perhaps a more mature, considered eye.

1.2 **Clarity of communication**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Abstract work but inextricably linked with the music – lyrics were an important part of the dialogue in some pieces. It was a pleasure to see the personalities of the dancers emerge, and there was a clear sense of connection with the audience.

1.3 **Quality of production**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	✓	

Strong choreography, evocative music, distinctive costume design, and simple but effective lighting and staging made this a stimulating and enjoyable evening.

You are also asked to **assess the strengths and weaknesses** of the event with specific reference to the following:

**1.4 Choreography (including originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc)**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		Although the work had the hallmark of Michael Clark's signature style (elegant, clean, sharp lines), there was a distinct sophistication and maturity evident. Much of the work was structurally well crafted, and although embracing a style of expansive and fast-paced movement based on strong classical vocabulary, each piece still retained its own identity. <i>Satie Studs</i> particularly stood out, with its live music (presented on stage by four pianists) and distinctive staging.
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	✓	

**1.5 Performers – including technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate.**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		The overall standard was high, with outstanding performances from Michael Clark himself, Tom Sapsford, and Kate Coyne.  The level of stamina was impressive, with a company of only seven dancers sustaining a high octane programme of 1 ½ hours.
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	✓	

**1.6 Sound – appropriateness of sound/music to the production. Please also indicate whether the music was performed live or recorded, in whole or in part, and what effect this had on the quality of the production.**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		All music was recorded with the exception of <i>Satie Studs</i> , which featured four pianists and four grand pianos on stage – this looked stunning. Michael Clark typically pushes the sound barriers and this evening was no exception. At one point, it went beyond what the venue's system could handle and there was distortion, but it was quickly resolved by the technical team.
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

**1.7 Design – including costume, set, lighting design.**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Good costumes, distinct to each piece. No sets as such, and simple but effective lighting.

**1.8 Technical standards – comment on the whether the production was technically well presented (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Technically well presented with tight sound and lighting cues that stretched into the curtain calls.

**1.9 Overall production – assess the success of the production in relation to any stated aims (e.g. in the programme or other printed material)**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

No stated aims as such in the free programme leaflet handed out on entering the theatre – just the title of each piece. The New Territories brochure gave a brief description of the programme, and the performance lived up to expectations.

**1.10 Audience – assess the appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size of the audience and record their reaction.**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	✓	

A good house (maybe 75% full?) and a very enthusiastic response suggests that the production attracted an appropriate, and satisfied, audience.

**2. Management of Event**

*Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and by the venue. Please answer, where relevant, with reference to the checklist below adding any other comments/observations you may have.*

**2.1 Suitability of the venue for the event.**

Theatre Royal is the ideal venue for a classically-based programme of modern dance. This programme sits well within the current season.

**2.2 Information/interpretive material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc), including the range of materials, quantity and clarity.**

Display space is limited at Theatre Royal, but season brochures and production fliers were clearly displayed, and there was a large poster about New Territories outside. I would have welcomed a more detailed programme giving more information about the company and the performers.

**2.3 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.**

I first saw the production promoted in the Theatre Royal brochure and website, and I received a direct mail from Theatre Royal. This was then reinforced through the New Territories brochure and underground advertising, as well as preview articles.

## 2.4 Accessibility of the venue, including:

- *Ease of booking and payment* - very easy to book by phone through Theatre Royal box office.
- *location of venue* - Ideal – coming from Edinburgh, it is a short walk from Queen Street station.
- *external signposting and signage* – fine. Easy to find.
- *internal directional signage* – fine – I knew this venue well, but I did notice some people looking for the bar to no avail.
- *access and provision for disabled people* – good (and this is detailed on the Theatre Royal website)
- *timing of the event* – fine.

## 2.5 Customer service, including: quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering).

I didn't visit the bar on this occasion, but box office and front-of-house staff were typically friendly and efficient.

## 3. Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding (if applicable)

*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.*

Theatre Royal acknowledges the Scottish Arts Council in its season brochure, but no one attending the performance on the night would know that the Scottish Arts Council had funded this event. The free A4 sheet available was obviously produced by Sadler's Wells/DTP and therefore only credits Arts Council England. There is no mention of the Scottish Arts Council on the website, and Theatre Royal should take action to address this.

The Scottish Arts Council is acknowledged alongside Glasgow City Council on the inside front cover of the New Territories brochure. Although this is clearly displayed, the design gives greater prominence to a range of other supporters (e.g. Visiting Arts, Esmee Fairbairn, Canadian High Commission etc) whose individual and collective contributions are much lower than the Scottish Arts Council's. There is reference to the Scottish Arts Council on the New Moves international website, but you really have to be looking for it (almost at the very bottom of the "About New Moves" page). New Moves International should take action to address these issues.

#### 4. Scoring

*Overall Rating. Please rate the production overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses.*

Excellent – a welcome return to form by Michael Clark with a dynamic programme of work that sits well within Theatre Royal and the New Territories Festival as a whole.

**Name:** Cindy Sughrue, Head of Dance, Scottish Arts Council

**Date:** 30 March 2004

**Advisor**

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

