



Scottish Arts Council

## ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

**Artist/Company:**

**Venue:** Tramway Glasgow

**Title of Event:** Meredith Monk and Vocal Ensemble

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

**Staged Vocal Ensemble performance**

**Date of Visit:** Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2005

**Overall Rating** 5

(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).

This was an excellent production, which gave audiences in and around Glasgow a chance to sample a truly unique form of vocal work. The production was extremely well presented in a good and generally well operated venue.

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.

Name: Martin Ritchie  
Specialist Advisor

Date:4/4/2005

*Please circle the relevant title*

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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	5	Meredith Monk's vocal idiom is a unique form of expression that relies almost completely on the use of the voice and body without recourse to texts.  New Territories showed good artistic vision in bringing her to Glasgow.
Clarity of communication	5	The work is remarkably communicative once the audience member is attuned to this approach. A more elemental form of communication is achieved by dispensing with the sung word. Meredith Monk and her ensemble are extremely effective communicators. Even in a large space, Monk's solo items were effectively performed, weaving a bond between performer and audience.
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	5	I had little knowledge of Monk's work prior to attending the performance. I was more aware of her choreographic work than her vocal work. Previews in the Herald newspaper were of a very general nature. The Tramway brochure included a good description of her work, which hinted that there might be more movement within the performance than there turned out to be. However, the performance was clearly labelled as a concert event. The event and post-performance discussion provided an excellent flavour of what Tramway's brochure described as the ability of Monk's work to "thrive at the intersection of music and movement." I think that it would be fair to say that many in the audience had little idea of what to expect from this event, but responded very positively to the evening.

## 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	2	No real choreography in this work. There was much ensemble music making which made full use of the theatrical staging possibilities in Tramway 1.
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	5	The distinctive extended vocal technique used by Monk and her ensemble initially seemed very rustic, but grew in intensity and effectiveness of communication as the performance progressed. The ensemble numbers, utilising percussive and instrumental elements, were the most effective. Monk's vocal tone is getting a little thin, but this is offset by her gifts of communication.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments and key reasons for rating</b>
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	5	The sound was extremely effectively realised throughout the performance.
Design – costume, set, lighting	4	Good use of lighting within a black box.
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	5	Good. Slickly presented performance.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	Large audience of around 300. Very warm response. A large number stayed for the post-performance talk. This was also much appreciated as it clarified issues in relation to Monk's performance method.

## **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.*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comment and key reasons for rating</b>
Suitability of the venue for the event	5	Ideal. Effective staging possibilities and well supported technically. A substantial space, which was well filled by both the production and the audience.
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>1</sup>	3	Little material specifically related to the performance. Programmes were very basic. The Tramway brochure contained more detailed information. The post-performance talk helped to offset this lack of printed information.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>2</sup>	5	Good visibility for this project thanks to New Territories mailings, Tramway brochure and both New Territories and Tramway websites. Good local press preview coverage.
Accessibility of venue	4	Good accessibility in general. The light levels in the auditorium pre-performance are quite low, in contrast to the brighter foyers. This might initially present a problem to some partially sighted patrons.
Ease of booking and payment	2	My initial attempt to purchase a ticket by telephone resulted in me leaving an answer phone message, which was not responded to that day. However, the following day I was able to book immediately by phone.

<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>
Location of venue	4	Good location. On street parking, rail and bus links are all easily accessible.
External signage and signposting	3	External signage is minimal. Signage could be explored further.
Internal directional signage	3	Adequate internal signage.
Access and provision for disabled people	4	Generally good provision.
Timing of the event	4	Standard timing of 7.30pm was good
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	3	Tramway box office staff seem a little under pressure at times, resulting in brittle customer service.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>3</sup>	5	This was clearly displayed on New Territories and Tramway materials.

<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.