



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

Artist/company: Scottish Dance Theatre

Venue: Dundee Rep Theatre

Title of Event: Autumn Tour 2003

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

performance

Date of Visit: 26/09/03

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		

This was a well-balanced programme of work, including two new pieces, which displayed the company's diverse and technically-accomplished performance skills.

As this is the beginning of the tour, the new pieces feel slightly tentative, but I would expect to see this overcome with time.

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	✓	

SDT's dancers are highly expressive and communicate extremely well. Contemporary dance often suffers from a lack of facial engagement, but these dancers always project in this way, even in more abstract, cerebral work.

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	✓	

Notwithstanding a technical glitch (see below), there were high production values throughout, lending a distinctive feel to each of the three pieces presented.

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		<p><i>On the Edge</i> (Annabelle Bonnery)– 4 dancers, 22 minutes. The integration and disintegration of two couples spending an evening together. Good duet and ensemble work, with effective use of space, set and props. Ultimately, the piece felt incomplete, but perhaps this will settle in time – it was the weakest piece.</p> <p><i>Broken</i> (Rui Horta) – 2 dancers, 13 minutes. This was technically demanding (in performance and staging) and was beautifully danced by Riccardo Meneghini and Gemma Nixon. The digital projection framed the performance space effectively and creates interesting lighting effects.</p> <p><i>My House is Melting</i> (Beth Cassani) - 6 dancers, 33 minutes. This piece is growing on me, having seen it several times now. There are a couple of sections where, despite the fast pace, it feels slightly long, but overall, this is an engaging series of vignettes, with one of the most tender and moving duets I've seen in the company's rep.</p>
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		<p>The performers were technically strong and enjoyable to watch. Although I found my eyes being drawn to certain performers, there is nevertheless a coherent style achieved without sacrificing individual personalities.</p>
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Recordings used throughout, which was appropriate given the synthetic nature of some of the sound, as well as the nature of many of the venues to which the company tours.

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 variety of style and costume, which added to the overall lively feel of the programme. Interesting use of lighting and film projection to create performance spaces.

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		

One glitch in an otherwise strong show – there seemed to be some initial problems with the data projector in the Rui Horta piece, and then some mechanical noise from the back of the auditorium (something like an air conditioning/ventilation fan).

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	✓	

SDT aims to present high quality contemporary dance/dance theatre and programmes that both entertain and challenge the audience. This was most certainly achieved.

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	✓	

The programme was entirely appropriate to the audiences for dance that SDT are helping to build in Dundee. I was struck by the wide age-range in the nearly full house. The company received an extremely enthusiastic response.

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.

Excellent – SDT's "home" venue.

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

Excellent – informative programmes issued free-of-charge and an unmissable display about the company in the foyer.

- 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.*

Excellent – strong print materials on display at venues where the company is touring, as well as images in season brochures and direct mail campaigns. Preview articles in the local and Scottish press. Good website with current information.

- 2.4 Accessibility of the venue, including:

- *Ease of booking and payment*

Good – efficient box office.

- *location of venue*

Good - central location, near public transport links, and reasonable parking nearby.

- *external signposting and signage*

Good

- *internal directional signage*

Competent – signage could be larger/more evident.

- *access and provision for disabled people*

Competent – lift is evident but other provision is unclear.

- *timing of the event*

Good - 8pm allows people to travel/eat before the show.

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

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.

Logo clearly displayed on marketing material, programme and website home page.

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.

A good programme, presented to a high standard by excellent dancers.

Rating: Good

Name: Cindy Sughrue

Date: 10/10/03

Advisor



Scottish Arts Council Officer

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