

## ARTISTIC EVALUATION. DANCE

Company: Scottish Dance Theatre

Venue: Falkirk Town Hall  
Title of event: Autumn Tour 2003.  
Date of visit: 22 November 2003.  
By: Julian Forrester

### Artistic Assessment

Vision and Imagination: Good.

I admired the energy and ambition of the three works and saw them as a foundation for fulfilling a vision which is undoubtedly there and will come through more strongly in future. Imagination is there enough of the time, though not always. The works ran slightly too long to carry imaginative ideas their whole length without needless repetition. This is a product of ambition that is great to see.

Communication: Competent

Dance is difficult: people take their own feelings away as the language is so unspecific. Perhaps the length (see above) dissipated the messages.

Quality of Production: Good.

Pleasing and professional in all categories

Choreography: Good to Excellent

Length already mentioned. Space used well – I felt its shape and the context it was given, in particular when used with objects, the door/table a case in point. Choreography was generally striking, always attention-keeping and, usually but not always, developed and elaborated in the course of each work.

Performers: Good +

I admired their skills, personalities, senses of humour and discipline. It felt like a true company of dancers each with equal weight.

Sound: Competent

Music recorded. Hard to see how it could be otherwise. This can take from the brightness of a work but generally felt sound helped things along, though not as a seamless companion to the dance

Design: Good

No quibbles, and nowhere obtrusive or unnecessary. See note re door/table above

Technical: Good

Touring usually throws up some wobbles. None were a problem. In fact, I only noticed one.

Overall Production: Good

I was more than happy - and I sense that the company is ready to do more and it certainly deserves to. It could do with better venues than the Falkirk Town Hall (See below). I thought the three works went well together, showing off a variety of imaginations and skills. They did not necessarily cohere artistically but mixed bills have that drawback. The use of the particular four (I saw three) choreographers was interesting and it would be intriguing to see how the company could present their work in future so as to mitigate the mixed bill problem.

Audience

Had I, or others in the audience of some 130, seen the works in a theatre with rather more style and character than the Town Hall, perhaps the answer to this question would be less bleak. In short, our surroundings placed SDT at a disadvantage. Reactions were enthusiastic if muted – even the young students who composed half the audience settled down from munching sweets and giggling. But there was nonetheless a general air of disconnection from the work on stage. A rather large gap between the front row and the stage did not help.

**Management of Event**

Suitability

See above. The stage width suited dance. Beyond that point praise for the venue rather dries up. This is no one's fault and thank goodness there is the money and the will to tour work such as this.

Information

Adequate. Display w/reviews and photos was welcome. Foyer otherwise anonymous, no sense of occasion whether for dance or any lively art. I felt both venue and company could have done more, but then touring is already hard work with little time to spare.

Publicity

I saw posters in local shops/restaurants. Box office had no details of the event four days out: knew only it was dance of some kind. Did not find credit for SAC on web site: only reference to it there was as source of funding. Credits otherwise seemed adequate.

Accessibility: OK

Location: Convenient

Signage: OK for Town Hall. Not for SDT

Internal signage: OK

Access: looked OK

Timing: OK

Customer Service: Few people in audience so not tested.

Acknowledgement of SAC

OK – credits generally not fulsome. No credit worthy of the name on web site.

**Scoring:**

**Good.** This is on the basis of the work, plus the ambition, promise, professionalism of the company and the feeling that in a year or so Good should turn to Excellent. I hope so. My enthusiasm for the evening as a whole was tempered only by the venue's shortcomings.

**Julian Forrester**

**Dance Advisor**

**23/11/03**