



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

**Artist/Company:** Scottish Dance Theatre  
**Venue:** Edinburgh Festival Theatre  
**Title of Event:** Spring Tour 2004  
**Type of Event:** Performance  
**Date of Visit:** Tuesday 6 April 2004 [also Dundee Rep Theatre, Thursday 19 February 2004 for comparison]  
**Overall Rating** 4

I am hugely supportive of SDT performing at the Festival Theatre and they have had great success. My worry is that the programme planning put two challenging pieces together and was overall a little dull. My other worry is that, as SDT well know, not every piece works on the large stage and most of their other stages are considerably smaller. I just felt that *Moment* did not work. The difficulty, which I understand, is having the resources to vary the repertoire according to the size of stage or making the difficult choice to return to a smaller venue and stage. These are the only two real criticisms of a company that looks extremely good on stage.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ David Todd \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 29 / 04 / 2004 \_\_\_\_\_

Specialist Advisor

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.

## 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	4	There was great vision and imagination in putting this programme together. Three complex pieces stretched the dancers and the audience. In the end I think that the first two pieces were too similar, too difficult and too grey and that this spoiled the vision.
Clarity of communication	4	Communication worked best in <i>Track</i> as the humour, colour and music helped. I feel that <i>Broken</i> failed to communicate properly on the Festival Theatre stage where the two dancers were too isolated and the projection behind them was so big and stretched that one either looked at the dancers or the projection. I am not sure that <i>Moment</i> really worked but this is as much the fault of the choreographer.
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	5	The whole production was of a very high quality. SDT claim in their website that they move, entertain, challenge and delight audiences. I feel that this programme had too much challenge and not enough moving, entertainment and delight.

## 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	4	The choreography was all highly original. In <i>Moment</i> and <i>Track</i> the whole stage was used well with six or seven dancers in each. In <i>Broken</i> the two dancers did look a little lost on the stage. The pieces were all a good length ( <i>Moment</i> 25', <i>Broken</i> 13' and <i>Track</i> 37')
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	5	The dancers perform to an extremely high standard. Their togetherness in <i>Moment</i> was amazing considering the lack of music and beat. In <i>Broken</i> the two dancers struggled to communicate with the audience but, having seen this in Dundee, I think this was a issue of the size of the stage. In <i>Track</i> there was great humour and communication with the audience.
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	5	The sound was all recorded but was appropriate for the pieces concerned. For <i>Moment</i> it was a sound track rather than music and there were some spoken words. <i>Broken</i> was a sound track rather than music with the exception of some music at the end. In <i>Track</i> there was at last music which was tuneful and rhythmic.
Design – costume, set, lighting	4	The costume design was appropriate for each piece with interesting skirt backs to the mens' costumes in <i>Moment</i> . However the greyness of those combined with the plain costumes in <i>Broken</i> made the first half very grey. The set for <i>Broken</i> was a open stage with brilliant lighting design bringing up a rectangle. The design for <i>Broken</i> incorporated film of woods which grew closer and closer

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
		but ended up being too big for the Festival Theatre stage. In <i>Track</i> at last there was some colour in costumes and a very simple but effective set literally held together with gaffa tape.
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	5	The technical presentation worked extremely well. I was aware from a previous performance that the technology in <i>Broken</i> was complex and I have attended a performance of <i>Broken</i> in St Andrews where the projector failed mid-performance. These technical difficulties seem now to have been overcome.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	There was an audience of over 400 which left much room in the Festival Theatre but would have filled the Traverse nearly twice. The audience reaction was in general most enthusiastic though some left at the interval as the first half was very hard work. The audience I would judge was a “dance” audience who knew the company and knew what to expect and there was no evidence of filling up with “paper”.

## 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.

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Suitability of the venue for the event	4	Edinburgh Festival Theatre is the best stage for dance in Scotland. I worry about its suitability for the very intimate <i>Broken</i> .
Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>1</sup>	5	The programmes were free with a cast list for the night. The programme was clear.
Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>2</sup>	5	Good leaflet with exciting images. Website is great.
Accessibility of venue	5	Excellent
Ease of booking and payment	5	No comment but no problem
Location of venue	5	City Centre, well known
External signage and signposting	5	Can't comment because of overfamiliarity.

<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>
Internal directional signage	5	Biased
Access and provision for disabled people	5	It's all there.
Timing of the event	5	Usual starting time. Good length
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	5	Biased
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>3</sup>	5	As far as I can see the conditions were met and the SAC logo is on the contact-page of the company's website

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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.