Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

Artist/Company: Scottish Dance Theatre

Venue: Southside Venue, Edinburgh

Title of Event: *Luxuria*

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

Performance

Date of Visit: Wednesday 24 August 2005

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

The closure of the Gateway Theatre left Scottish Dance Theatre facing challenges with venue and performance times in performing at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. However, none of the problems were evident in the wonderful and up-lifting performances of Liv Lorent's glorious *Luxuria*. The full company pulled out all the stops.

Name: Anita Clark Date: 12 September 2005

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	5	The Southside venue is basic and the morning time slot gave SDT many challenges. However, the company under Janet Smith's direction approached this with imagination and resilience and gave festival audiences a delightful morning injection of radiant and emotive dance.
Clarity of communication	5	From the moment they enter the stage, Scottish Dance Theatre dancers engage directly with the audiences on a deep, emotional level.
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	5	Due to the change of venue and time constraints, the company were only able to perform one piece, making it a short 35minute show. However, as it was such an up-lifting and high quality production, there was no sense of being short-changed.

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	5	*Luxuria* choreographed by Liv Lorent uses all ten members of Scottish Dance Theatre in a sensual, evocative and well-crafted piece of choreography. The intimacy of the venue, gave me a different experience of the work than I have had in previous performances, with the intensity of the duets being particularly consuming.
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	5	SDT dancers are all technically assured dancers but much more than that, they bring a high level of artistry to their performances.
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	4	The recorded soundtrack for *Luxuria* is effective and works extremely well to create the atmosphere to accompany the choreography.
Design – costume, set, lighting	4	The costume design is highly effective and although the lighting provision in the venue was limited, the work was presented
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	4	Although the Southside venue provided the company with limited technical resources, everything was presented to a high technical standard, ensuring the audiences had a true experience of Scottish Dance Theatre.

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	There was a good sized audience (approximately 80% capacity) and the company received a fantastically, enthusiastic reaction.

3. 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	3	The Southside venue provided many challenges and would not have been the company's preferred option.
Information/ interpretive material at venue[1]	4	Press reviews were displayed in front of house and a simple, photo-copied programme notes were distributed to the audience.
Publicity/ pre-publicity[2]	4	Faced with the challenge of incorrect performance details in the Fringe programme, SDT worked hard at publicity and press coverage. The bus adverts were effective and will have played role in raising the profile of the company.
Ease of booking and payment	5	I booked tickets over the phone from the Fringe box office. The tickets were posted out to me.
Location of venue	3	A little way out of the city centre but accessible by public transport.
External signage and signposting	3	Adequate.
Internal directional signage	3	There was not much in the way of internal signage but it was not difficult to find your way around.
Access and provision for disabled people	2	There are steps at the entrance of the venue and to the performance space. If there was access for wheelchair users, it was not obvious.
Timing of the event	4	The performance started at 11.30am which did not seem ideal but the short, morning performances seemed to work for audiences and the company achieved good houses throughout the run.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	2	Front of house staff provided a basic service to customers and got easily flustered.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding[3]	4	Scottish Arts Council was credited on marketing material and on SDT's website.

[1] These include programmes, displays etc., assessing the range, quality and clarity

[2] 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

[3] 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.