



Scottish Arts Council

## ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

**Artist/company:** STDT

**Venue:** Albert Halls, Stirling

**Title of Event:** Showcase Evening & Ceilidh

**Type of Event:** (*Traditional dance-forms showcase, followed by Ceilidh*)

**Date of Visit:** 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 2004

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	<b>X</b>	
Excellent		

The idea of having an evening where all dance-forms can be aired, is a good one, and can only get better with experience.

1.2 **Clarity of communication**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	
Excellent		

The Title of the Day said it all.

1.3 **Quality of production**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
Good		

I feel that rehearsal time was inadequate – the hall was used by others right up until early evening – entry to the hall was not available until 6pm – I arrived at 7.15 and everyone was practising at the same time. For such a large production, rehearsals should have been better structure.

Sound was a problem too – there was too many hitches with music getting switched, lost etc. CD's from various

Excellent		performers should have been labelled clearly and the sound technician should have had the time to put these into some sort of order.
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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>The standard varied between the performing groups. There were some outstanding spots: Joanna Buchan Celtic Spirit Who all showed an imaginary use of traditional dancing and all executed their dancing to a high professional standard. Then there were some which were plainly only 'hobby-dancers' who tried to do something which was far too advanced for their abilities.</p>
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	
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 Highlights which can only be rated as excellent, would be Joanna Buchan, John Sikorski, Celtic Spirit. The Edinburgh Tatroo Highland Ceilidh Dancers were very good too, although the room was a bit too small for this kind of performance. RSCDS were quite poor – they started the evening and were trying to do something very showy at which they did not succeed – these dancers all knew each other, but danced as if they had never met – it was only later on in</p>
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
Good		

Excellent		<p>the evening that they danced as if they had rehearsed at all.</p> <p>Edinburgh Early Dancers should have full mark for dress – it made a lovely break from tartan and highland etc.</p> <p>The spot which should have full marks for professionalism and performance skills, was Queen Victoria School – they had to switch to accordion music from pipe music in the last few minutes before the showcase started, it was later explained that one of the pipers (out of two) had broken his hand that day. They asked one of the ceilidh-musicians to help out, and these young people had literally no time to practice with the musician – they still went on the floor, and danced flawlessly as if they had never danced to anything else – I was very impressed.</p> <p>Jonathan Burnett had the shortest spot of the evening – 16 bars of dance. – a fun little entry.</p>
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**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: There was a lot of errors with regards to sound – which dragged the production down to amateur status. Most sound was recorded on CD's. The sound-technician was swamped with them, and could not keep track of what belonged to whom. Next time, it would be better if the technician had been given rehearsal time also, and that all performers was told to label their CD's clearly. The RSCDS's pianist had a few stops and starts too – which was not impressive – again rehearsal time should have been longer. The Ceilidh-band was fine – they were professional musicians who just got on with it.
Very Poor		
Poor	<b>x</b>	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

**1.7 Design – including costume, set, lighting design.**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Each individual group were obviously responsible for their own costumes, and all were representative of their art-form. Joanna Buchan's costume was lovely in as much as it went completely away from the traditional but still represented her dance.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	

Excellent		
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**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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: No it was not. See above comments.
Very Poor		
Poor	<b>x</b>	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

**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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: In spite of the hitches, it was a good night – the showcase was broken up with dancing for all, which was good as the evening would have been very long otherwise.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	
Excellent		

**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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The production was appropriate for the audience, unfortunately, there were not enough spectators – most of the spectators had something to do with the show and there were not enough 'outside' people attending – a great pity. I am not sure, but I would imagine there were under a 100 people there in total, this is hard to estimate, as
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		

Good	<b>x</b>	there was a lot of coming and going.
Excellent		

## 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.

The Albert Hall was suitable, as it had a stage, and a floor with room to sit at tables and still with enough floor space to dance. Next time, one must ensure that there will be adequate rehearsal facilities well in advance of the evening.

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

The tables were nicely made up with white table-cloths, decorated with a thistle and with STDT material laid out also plus a programme of events.

### 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.*

This could be better – much better – there were not enough people – STDT must focus much more on their marketing of themselves and events.

### 2.4 Accessibility of the venue, including:

- Ease of booking and payment

Not easy, I phoned STDT, and was told to get in contact with the Tollbooth or Albert Hall. Upon phoning the Albert Hall, I was told that I could buy tickets for the evening there, but I would have to go to the Tollbooth for the rest of the days tickets. Upon phoning the Tollbooth, I was told that they had no day tickets as advertised in STDT's programme and they did not know if the evening performance was included in that – despite what the programme said – they were helpful though and phoned me back after it had been sorted out – explaining that they had had a computer program – but I feel that there was a lack of communication between all who sold tickets.

- location of venue

Stirling is good for this sort of thing – very central, the only problem is parking

- external signposting and signage

Good

- internal directional signage

Good

- access and provision for disabled people

Public Building, so Fine

- timing of the event

Fine

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

Fine

**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.*

Yes SAC was acknowledged

**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.*

**Competent**

This was the first showcase of hopefully many more – the idea is good, and a lot will hopefully have been learned from the problems which occurred at this event. And as this

becomes a permanent feature, hopefully the standard of performers will be raised even higher as STDT will build up a database of groups who are outside their locality. Marketing is still very much in need of improvement. And rehearsal-time and space must be catered for, bearing in mind that this is not one single dance group, but several groups coming together.

**Name:** Pia Walker

**Date:** 29 March, 2004

**Advisor** **X** **Scottish Arts Council Officer**