



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

Artist/Company: Y Dance

Venue: Queen Anne High School, Dunfermline

Title of Event: Summer School

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

A weeklong summer dance programme for young people aged 11 – 16 years. Covering breakdance, streetdance, contemporary or capoeira resulting in a performance.

Date of Visit: Monday 11 and Friday 15 July 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).

Overall rating 4

One particular strength of this project was the opportunity of having four dance workers and a musician working with the young people. With each dance worker specialising in delivering a particular area of the project but still working as a team. This method of working allows for a greater support structure and if additional space is used, to break down the overall group into smaller sizes.

The tutors were friendly, enthusiastic and gave clear communication verbally and then demonstrated physically, at one point the teacher emphasised that they were looking for the 'quality of movement' rather than just speed.

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.

The presence of the live musician all week provided a refreshingly different musical accompaniment instead of taped chart music. Even though the live music added depth to the dance I wonder how well the young people connected to the drums.

The end dance piece produced was well rehearsed and a sufficient length for a weeks work. The young people seemed to really enjoy the work and as it was completed free to the participants which was extremely good value.

It was unfortunate though that the project 'lost' quite a few participants during the week. On the first day there were approximately 35 – 40 young people, which included 4 boys, and at the end of the week there were 25 (including one boy). The male dance worker wasn't available on the first day of the project and I can't help thinking that this factor may have prevented some of the boys returning. The choice of dance styles on the first day were Contemporary and a diluted version of African dance which for some young people would have been completely unfamiliar. Perhaps it might have been better to gain the young people's confidence first in familiar dance styles and then when a relationship has been formed introduce different styles. Or offer more choice to the participants, for example if a group of young people were not interested in any other style apart from Breakdance / streetdance then work separately with them and produce more than one dance at the end of the week. At least then they would have still been engaged in the project.

I thought the young people could have been challenged more with the content and the over structure of the choreography, for a project employing 5 members of staff I was expecting something more unique or powerful.

Name: Emma Jones Date: 25 / 07 / 2005

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please circle the relevant title

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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	3	The notion of combining different dance styles and collaborating with a musician was an interesting concept but I felt the overall material taught/produced could have challenged the young people further. This consisted of Breakdance/streetdance, Contemporary and a diluted version of African dance. The latter could have been an excellent opportunity to introduce the young people to a different culture as well as a different dance style but unfortunately the teacher delivering this section only delivered a limited knowledge of the style.
Clarity of communication	4	At the beginning of the course the project leader explained to the young people the weeks' aims eg. lots of different styles of dance, a piece produced at the end of the week. Throughout the class on Monday class tutors were clear with instruction, enthusiastic and encouraging.
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	3	The production was well rehearsed and good quality of movement had been achieved in parts of the performance.

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	3	<p>Approximately 25 performers, the dance piece was about 10 mins. The dance performance was divided into stylistic sections with short transitions linking the sections together. The majority of the dance was performed in big groups in unison but parts were split down into smaller group sections, eg. the Breakdance/streetdance part, the Contemporary part. It was obvious in the piece that the young peoples own creativity had been involved in the choreography as well as tutor directed sequences.</p> <p>The overall rating would have been improved if more importance had been place on the choreographic devises and structures used and trying to find a unique way of combining the different dance styles used instead of keeping the dance styles in separate sections.</p>
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	4	The dancers were a combination of beginners and those with experience. They were well rehearsed and performed their work adequately.

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	4	A musician was employed to collaborate with the dance tutors. In his delivery of teaching he was enthusiastic, funny and engaging. His live drumming/sound in the performance added depth to the dance piece performed.
Design – costume, set, lighting	N/A	The dance piece was performed in a school theatre during the day. There was no blackout or lighting designs, no set, for costume use some of the young people had bought Y Dance T – shirts which were wore in the performance.
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	3	The performance was presented as an informal sharing rather than a formal performance. No lights were used, the music was a live musician but the presentation of the dance work was clean, well rehearsed with movement and music cues executed well.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	4	The audience consisted of family and friends of the young people, there were approximately 50 attendees. The audience members seemed pleased with their child's performance.

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	5	Excellent community venue for the project. Clean, clear rooms with new wooden floors. I would say though that the original space used for the first day (there was approximately 40 young people on the first day) was too small for the size of the group.
Information/ interpretive material at venue ¹	2	No displays visible of Y Dance's work, in terms of photos or video footage from other projects or this project and no programmes produced for the performance.
Publicity/ pre-publicity ²	4	Publicity material available at the reception desk of the venue were; Summer Dance Project 2005 publicity with booking form and separate generic Y Dance publicity. (Both enclosed)
Ease of booking and payment	4	Bookings made either by filling in the paper format or by booking through Queen Anne High School.
Location of venue	4	Easily located.
External signage and signposting	2	No external signage about the project / company was visible.

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

Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
Internal directional signage	4	Posters were displayed advertising the project and staff available to direct people.
Access and provision for disabled people	5	Very good provision. The doors to the venue were wheelchair accessible, (automatic and a good width) the project was in a room on ground floor level, and the Theatre for the performance was accessible for wheel chair users. The seating was raked but I presume wheelchair usage would be available at the front of the raked seating.
Timing of the event	3	The project started every day from 10.00am and lasted until 3.00pm. The performance on the last day was at 2.30pm unfortunately only allowing parents not working during the day to watch their child's performance.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	N/A	The performance was presented as an informal sharing rather than a formal performance.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ³	3	No SAC logo on the separate summer school publicity but the generic Y Dance publicity available with the SAC Logo. On the first day of the project the project leader explained to the young people that SAC and NOF had funded this programme. (Publicity enclosed)

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.