

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue:ek performance / Tramway

Title of Event: Soul Pilots

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, work in progress, opens rehearsal etc)
Performance.

Date of Visit: 13/02/04

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 a Council Officer, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work, 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

1.1 Vision and Imagination.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: A rigorous and intellectual vision pervades this exploration of group and societal/cultural dynamics. Six performers of various nationalities answer questions and play games that are designed to question individual identity within a group situation that borders on the anthropological. It is both artful and shrewd although at times it is almost too focused making it appear rather forensic and unemotional. There is however an absurdist element to the production which brings out a more human and humourous element.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: This is a clearly communicated production with a sharp performance lens focussed on the action and explorations. Perhaps too clear that it becomes almost simple, thereby losing some sense of subtlety and complexity.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

You are also asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the event with specific reference to the following:

1.3 Script (particularly in relation to new work, or second productions).

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The programme notes did not credit anyone for the writing of this performance. Instead this production had the feeling of a group devised text. Performers answered questions relayed to them via a soundtrack asking them about categorisation and identity. They also contributed fantastical / impossible stories with humour and warmth. There did not, however, appear to be an emphasis on text / language beyond naturalism.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	/	
Good		
Excellent		

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The direction was nicely paced, confident and at ease with itself especially in relation to physical gestures, timing and the material. However the production might have gone further. It reached a point where it could have taken the audience on a more dangerous and rewarding path, perhaps opening up a more human and less forensic and analytical approach.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	/	
Good		
Excellent		

1.5 Standard of performers- where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: All the performers gave strong sincere performances imbued with a witty rhythm and sense of enjoyment. It was a strong ensemble production with attention to the details of body language and expression.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	/	
Excellent		

1.6 Use of music – in particular please comment on the quality and appropriateness of any original music composed for the production. Please 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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The original pre-recorded soundscape material by Stephen Cracknell worked very well. Ambient yet also slightly menacing, atmospheric but not over-used.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	/	
Excellent		

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Soul Pilots employed a gestural and physical language that revealed an attention to detail. It was a cleverly shaded physicality that focussed upon natural pedestrian movement and drew the eye towards small expressions. It also employed stillness to good use.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	/	
Excellent		

1.8 Design – including set, costume and lighting design. Please take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue, and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Costumes were casual everyday clothes. The set consisted of a bell suspended from the ceiling and white lines on the floor that resembled a running track. At the back of the stage was a simple rectangular frame hung from the ceiling which occasionally changed colour. It was simple but effective. The lighting was also simple and clever, focussing mainly on the use of floor lights to make use of Tramway 4's long narrow design.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	/	
Good		
Excellent		

1.9 Technical Standards – please comment on whether the production was professionally presented from a technical point of view.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The technical standards were professional.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	/	
Good		
Excellent		

1.10 Overall production – was the production successful overall in relation to any stated aims (e.g. in the programme or other printed material, and stated aims and objectives)

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: An interview in The Herald with the director Pamela Carter stated that she wanted "the familiar to become unfamiliar". She achieved this to a small extent by exploring with an offbeat sensibility how individuals work in a group situation. The strength of the production, however, developed from a combination of the strong ensemble performances and the smoothly negotiated gestures and body language. The obvious rigour and intelligence of the production was stifled by a sense of control and analysis that did not allow for more emotional connections or risks.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	/	
Good		
Excellent		

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?

The audience was mixed in terms of age and gender but with an emphasis on those in their early twenties. Some of the company was drawn from ex-RSAMD students and the director teaches there.

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production. This production was sold out - approximately 120 people - Tramway 4. Reaction was positive yet slightly muted.

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 Was the venue suitable for the event? Tramway is known for supporting emerging new work. This was a Tramway Dark Lights Commission.

2.2 Information/Interpretive material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc)

- range, quantity and clarity. - only programmes. These were free, contained only basic information - names of the company, one quote and acknowledgements but were pleasantly printed/designed.

2.3 Publicity/Pre-Publicity for the Event (leaflets, posters, etc)

- 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.
Included in Tramway brochure and individual fliers via mailing list. Preview in The Herald and The List. Tramway website: easy/simple to use, nicely designed - but info the same as the brochure.

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment - easy - via phone.
- location - Glasgow southside.

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- external signposting - Tramway is a large building, easy to spot if you know it but the external signing is minimal in relation to its size.
- internal directional signing - good.
- access and provision for disabled people - good access - level access to performance spaces and bar. Tramway 4 (where Soul Pilots takes place) has Audio Description facilities.
- timing of event - 8pm

2.5 Customer service

- quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering). All staff friendly and efficient.

3. Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding (if applicable)

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 and 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, and computer programmes etc. "

Please comment on whether the above conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.

SAC logo included in brochure, fliers, programme and website.

Name: Mark Waddell.

Date: 14.02.04.

Advisor * Scottish Arts Council Officer

(Please tick above as appropriate)