



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DANCE

Artist/Company: X Factor

Venue: Dance Base

Title of Event: Fringe Programme 05

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

Date of Visit: 18/8/05

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).

4-Good X Factor performed well, but the company looked tired, which detracted from the overall enjoyment of the piece.

Name: Susan Hay

Date: 22/08/05

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer ✓

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	This was a double bill with contrasting pieces of work by Alan Greig and Allan Irvine. <i>Uncanny</i> drew on a variety of influences to create different scenes. Good use of humour with the <i>Running up the hill</i> scene being a classic.
Clarity of communication	3	X Factor's dancers seemed tired, lacking the energy that they have had in previous performances (eg <i>Traverse in spring</i>) and therefore did not show off the piece to its best advantage.
Quality of production – production's success in relation to stated aims i.e., in the programme or other printed material)	4	The company successfully portrayed what they advertised.

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	<i>Uncanny</i> – a mixture of group pieces and solos. This time the piece did not flow as well as before, in my opinion. This could be due to the revised cast.
Performers - technical standard, performance skills, and ability to communicate	3	Performers looked tired and were not pushing themselves within the show. Jennifer Blake, a new cast member, did not seem completely at ease with the choreography. Gillian Neil, the apprentice, worked well within the team.
Sound – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	4	All pre-recorded sound tracks – good quality sound.
Design – costume, set, lighting	4	All worked well for the company.

Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Technical standards – technical presentation of the production (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc)	4	Technically smooth show.
Audience – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	5	Full house @70. A very positive response from the audience. Most came out with smiles on their faces.

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	Dance Base provides an ideal focal point for quality Scottish and international dance on the Fringe. The performance area works well for solo/duet work.
Information/ interpretive material at venue ¹	4	Posters were prolific in the entrance to Dance Base informing the public about shows and workshops. On the notice board outside the theatre, there was a listing of all the shows. This was not very prominent and could easily be missed. Perhaps something to put on the downstairs notice board too.
Publicity/ pre-publicity ²	4	I was aware of the Dance Base Festival programme from the brochure I received by direct mail, which was informative and easy to read, and included a discount if booking all 4 shows. I did not notice any promotional materials on display at usual outlets, but this is a notoriously difficult period for leaflets and other print materials to be effective given the vast number of productions being promoted across the city. The Dance Base website did not seem to be functioning very well saying the programme would be up June 28, but there is still no listing of events.
Ease of booking and payment	3	I tried to book over the telephone before I went on holiday, to be told that booking did not start till the following week. This meant I had to get someone else to make the booking on my behalf. Mentioning when the box office opened at Dance Base within the leaflet would have been helpful. Booking on the website was not possible – instead there is a message advising people to book by telephone.
Location of venue	5	Well situated in the heart of the Old Town within easy walking distance of Princes Street.

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
External signage and signposting	3	A large vertical banner makes Dance Base quite visible when approaching from the east, but it's very easy to miss when approaching from other directions.
Internal directional signage	3	Internal signage not obvious for first time users.
Access and provision for disabled people	3	Dance Base is fully accessible for people with limited mobility, although street level signage could be improved to make the location of the lift more obvious. I'm not sure what provision is made for people with visual or hearing impairments. The temporary theatre seating fit out did not appear to make any provision for wheelchair users. This had been highlighted last year and should have been addressed.
Timing of the event	5	The rotating schedule is excellent – it treats the companies equally and makes it possible to see all four programmes of work even if you are only available at certain times each day.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	4	Friendly and helpful front of house staff. The café is a good addition, but only one person manning the café, so difficult to purchase and consume a beverage during the interval.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ³	4	The Scottish Arts Council is acknowledged in the programme and on the Dance Base website and brochure. However, a dance banner which was given to the venue for the Fringe period was not visible.

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.