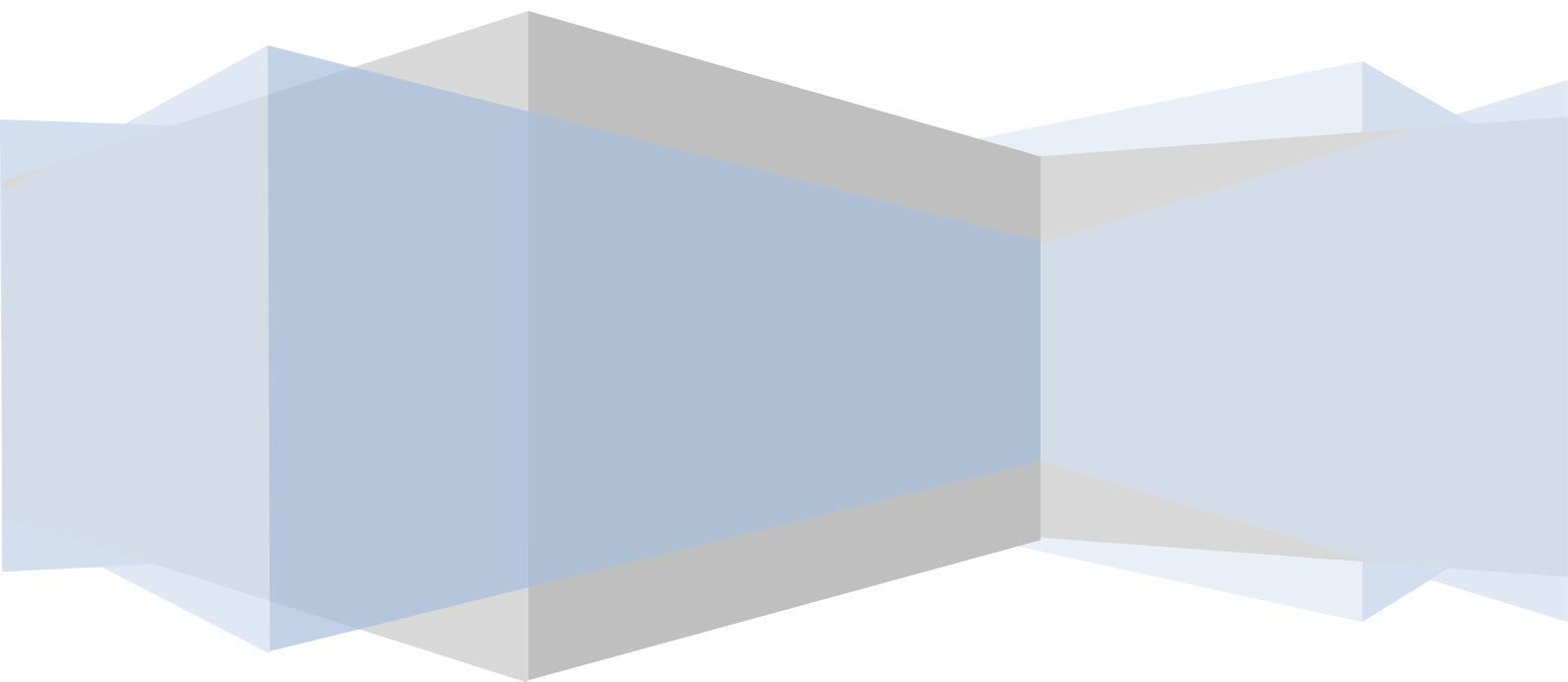


AN AUDIENCE WITH *JACK SCOUT*

**A quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the
audience's experience of *Jack Scout***

**Report prepared by Yun Ho of Lancaster University for
Sap Dance and Louise Ann Wilson Company**



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1. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an evaluation of *Jack Scout*, a walking performance specific to Jack Scout, an intimate location in Silverdale, Lancashire, of extraordinary aesthetic, cultural and scientific value overlooking the vast sands and tides of Morecambe Bay.

Performed twice a day over ten days between 17 and 26 September 2010, audiences of 17 at a time were led by two guides through the heath, along the shore line and over the beach as live music, dance, voice and art evoked its land, sands, skies and sea. Woven into these impressions was the story of the *Matchless*, a pleasure boat that was shipwrecked in 1895 with the loss of 34 lives.

The work arose from four 'Dialogues' that the creative team had with the place and people with different knowledges of that place: an 'Underworld Dialogue' with National Trust wardens and plant ecologists about the site's unique flora and fauna; an 'Overworld Dialogue' with RSPB educators and ornithologists about the behaviour of indigenous species of birds, butterflies and bats on the heath and migratory birds on the beach; an 'Innerworld Dialogue' with children at a nearby school for urban children with special needs; and a 'Waterworld Dialogue' with cross-bay guides and fishermen concerning fishing traditions and the Bay's infamous tides, shipwrecks and drownings. Through these dialogues the creative team used experimental cartography, writing, improvisation and notation, drawing, and photography to register and distil their own experience of the place and to evolve material that was transformed into the final performance.

Altogether the project aimed to evolve new ways of perceiving the natural world, of increasing human well-being, of exploring environmental values, of advancing the rural arts and creating new audiences.

Jack Scout was funded by Arts Council England, Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Lancaster City Council and Nuffield Theatre Lancaster. It was delivered in collaboration with a host of partners who offered advice and/or support-in-kind, including: Dukes Theatre Lancaster, Gibraltar Farm Caravan and Camping Silverdale, Grand Theatre Lancaster, Kayes Nursery Gardens and Tea Rooms Silverdale, Lancashire County Council Environment Directorate, Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts, Maritime Museum Lancaster, More Music Morecambe, Morecambe Bay Partnership, The National Trust, Ridgway Park School Silverdale, Royal Exchange Manchester, RSPB Leighton Moss, Silverdale Parish Council, and Visitors Information Centre Lancaster.

2. THE APPROACH TAKEN TO AUDIENCE EVALUATION

Following each performance the audience were asked to complete a questionnaire and express their thoughts on the performance in written or visual form in a 'notebook'. There were 204 responses to the questionnaire and over 110 written and visual comments recorded in the notebook.

3. AUDIENCE PROFILE

3.1 Age profile of the respondents

This shown in the table below

Age group	Number	Percentage
Under 16	9	4%
16-24	7	3%
25-34	10	5%
35-44	33	16%
45-54	42	21%
55-64	71	35%
65+	31	16%
Total	204	100%

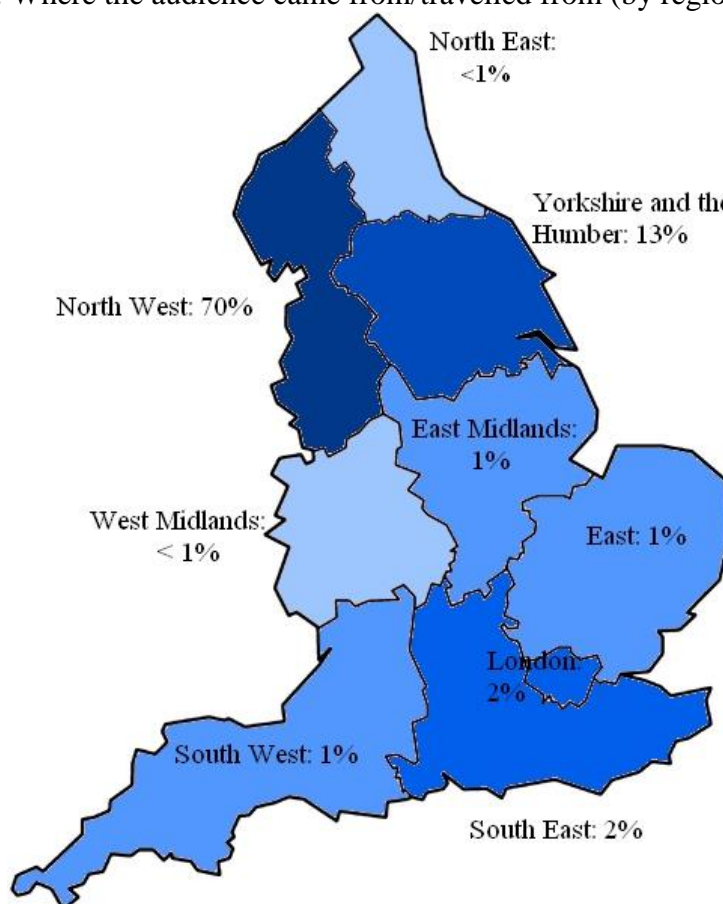
Whilst this suggests that the performance appealed to a wide age range the most significant age group was between 55-64 (35%) and over 70% of the audience surveyed were 45 years and older.

3.2 Where the audience came from

Table 2 below identifies where the audience came from it shows that over half the audience (60%) came from the local region (those with LA – Lancaster postcodes). Further regional analysis (see figure 1) identifies that 70% of the audience came from the North West with a significant percentage (13%) coming from Yorkshire and Humberside.

City/Town	N	P	City/Town	N	P	City/Town	N	P
Lancaster	54	26%	Crewe	2	1%	Bradford	1	<1%
Carnforth	32	16%	Holmfirth	2	1%	Bury	1	<1%
Blank	12	6%	Huddersfield	2	1%	Chesterfield	1	<1%
Morecambe	12	6%	Leeds	2	1%	Doncaster	1	<1%
Kendal	11	5%	Manchester	2	1%	Dronfield	1	<1%
Sheffield	6	3%	Milnthorpe	2	1%	Halifax	1	<1%
London	5	2%	Preston	2	1%	Hitchin	1	<1%
Ulverston	4	2%	Silverdale	2	1%	Lytham St Annes	1	<1%
Cleckheaton	3	1%	Suffolk	2	1%	Milton Keynes	1	<1%
Dorking	3	1%	Wakefield	2	1%	Morpeth	1	<1%
Hebden Bridge	3	1%	Wotton-Under-Edge	2	1%	Poulton-Le-Fylde	1	<1%
Liverpool	3	1%	Yealand	2	1%	Skelmersdale, Wigan	1	<1%
Sedbergh	3	1%	Ambleside	1	<1%	Stoke-On-Trent	1	<1%
Sowerby Bridge	3	1%	Blackburn	1	<1%	Thame	1	<1%
Ashton-Under-Lyne	2	1%	Blackpool	1	<1%	Thornton-Cleveleys	1	<1%
Overseas	6	3%				Total	204	100%

Figure 1: Where the audience came from/travelled from (by region on map)



3.3 How the audience found out about the event

The data and the bar chart below illustrate how the audience found out about *Jack Scout*. Some of the respondents ticked more than one answer, so the total number is more than 204 (the number of questionnaires completed).

Table 3: How the audience found out about the show (ranking from high to low)

	Number	Percentage
Sap Dance/Louise Ann Wilson Company mailing	45	21%
Nuffield Theatre mailing	26	12%
Flyers in local venue/business	21	10%
Local press	9	4%
National Trust/AONB/RSPB mailing	9	4%
Visitor Information Centre	6	3%
Morecambe Bay Partnerships	1	0%
Other (please specify)	93	44%
Total	210	100%

Surprisingly 93 people identified that they had found out about the performance in a number of 'other' ways. The second highest response was via mailing from Sap Dance or Louise Ann Wilson Company, which was 21%. Twelve per cent found out about the performance via mailing from Nuffield Theatre, and 10% from the flyers in local venues or businesses.

The percentage of the audience that found out about the performance information from partner organisations, such as National Trust, AONB, RSPB and Morecambe Bay Partnerships, was quite low (4%).

Respondents identified a number of different ‘other’ ways in which they found out about the performance (see table 4). By far the most significant way was through friends or family. However, this may be as a result of the friend or member of family receiving mail shots from the companies identified in table 3.

	Number	Percentage	Percentage of total
Invited by friend or family	55	59%	27%
Word of Mouth	9	10%	4%
Blank	8	9%	4%
Partner, funder or staff	7	8%	3%
Internet	4	4%	2%
Kayes Tea Room	3	3%	1%
Northern Earth magazine	1	1%	< 1%
Lawrence Batley Theatre	1	1%	< 1%
ACE	1	1%	< 1%
The Dukes	1	1%	< 1%
LICA staff information	1	1%	< 1%
Virtual Lancaster	1	1%	< 1%
Library poster local	1	1%	< 1%
Total	93	100%	44%

3.4 Mode of transport used to attend event

Table 5 shows how the audience travelled to the performance. A significant number of respondents indicated that they used more than one mode of transport, such as bus and train, or train and walking. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that this may have been a result of the fact that publicity materials strongly encouraged audiences to travel to Silverdale by public transport, and that everyone who purchased tickets for the show was sent detailed public transport information (also downloadable online). Yet despite these efforts, driving by car was clearly the most popular form of transport. This may be due to the relatively remote location of the performance, but in any event this is salutary reminder that those who promote rural activities in general face an uphill task in trying to persuade visitors to use greener means of transportation.

Way to get there	Number	Percentage
By car	169	78%
Walked	22	10%
By train	17	8%
Other	5	2%
By bus	4	2%
Cycled	0	0%
Total	217	100%

3.5 Audience membership of National Trust, AONB and RSPB

Significantly, 79 of the total 204 respondents identified themselves as members of partner organizations.

Categories of organisations	Number	Percentage
National Trust	37	47%
RSPB, National Trust	15	19%
RSPB	13	16%
RSPB, AONB, National Trust	8	10%
RSPB, AONB	5	6%
AONB	1	1%
AONB, National Trust	0	0%
Total	79	100%

4. OUTCOMES

4.1 Audience's perception of the area and landscape

- The questionnaire asked the audience to indicate if their perception of the area had been changed by the performance. There were 41 responses to this question and indeed over 90% indicated that their perception had changed as a result of the performance. Specific comments in the notebook were:

- ☞ Brought spirits of the landscape, history, soul of the area to life/see Morecambe Bay in a different light*
- ☞ Beautiful Place and the piece/walk/work made me/allowed me to experience/view the place more clearly*
- ☞ The performance was emotional. Today I have seen Jack Scout in a totally different light*
- ☞ Thank you for a new vision of a favourite place.*
- ☞ Truly beautiful, mesmerising. [...] I love Silverdale & the performance gave me a real opportunity to focus on the different news & aspects & fall in love with it all over again.*

- It was clear from the written comments in the 'notebook' that the performance had allowed members of the audience to perceive the landscape in new ways. There were comments about the beauty of the landscape and also how it provoked members' emotions.

- ☞ Beautiful, evocative, moving, inspiring, space, light, texture, sound, almost cinematic.*
- ☞ Inspiring Performance. [...] Crossing time, crossing sand, crossing water, crossing and overlapping of nature, music, voice, sounds. Crossing of textures – tweed, bark, sail cloth, mud, water, soft moss and grass.*
- ☞ Energetic, amazing, absorbing & very clever. It took me completely out of myself.*

- Respondents also persistently noted how the natural world had been integrated into and framed by the performance. It is clear from these comments that the place had provided an important and irreplaceable aspect to the performance.

- ☞ *I really liked the second part of the piece in the sands. The use of perspective and interaction with the landscape was excellent. The first part of the piece felt very intimate and close while the second part felt very open and distant.*
- ☞ *Loved the way performance & events in [the] environment were intertwined*
- ☞ *I was struck by the perspective, the long views, the way the production led the eye to embrace the bay...*
- ☞ *Exquisite merging of artist with landscape, the desperation & suffering of the women lingered with me as we walked away. So powerful, outstanding*
- ☞ *Fabulous bay, water, sun, stones, wind and trees. Add movement, music and enigmatic conversation you end up with a great experience.*
- ☞ *Fantastic setting which was used very creatively*

- In addition, the ways in which sounds from the natural environment were woven with **music** into the performance provoked a significant number of comments from the audience:

- ☞ *I also really liked the laconic, drawly singing with the dancer on the back + the sound of the running on the sand. And listening to the sound of pipistrellus [a genus of bats] with my eyes closed.*
- ☞ *Drink in each sound through the silence*
- ☞ *Thanks for the music echoing around the bay*
- ☞ *I did enjoy the juxtaposition of music with the natural sounds and silence.*
- ☞ *Music was an important part, kind of replacing conversation + creating a more atmospherically keen + clever feeling – not being sure where it came from to begin with was fun.*
- ☞ *The performed sounds made me much more aware of the ‘natural’ sound of birds, wind, sawing [from nearby, a] plane.*
- ☞ *Suddenly one realises that you are listening only to the sounds around & fully involved with the performance.*
- ☞ *The clarinet sounded great in that big space, + bouncing of the cliffs – and the sound changed as the musician got closer to the cliffs.*
- ☞ *Mesmerising + haunting music*
- ☞ *Thanks for the music echoing around the bay.*
- ☞ *It was able to recreate a wonderful feeling of being on a ship – the voice/creaking gate was great.*
- ☞ *The use of sound in the piece was very original and worked very well.*
- ☞ *Were intertwined, and intriguingly difficult to tie anything down, like the voice of the singer which seemed to wonder between keys & to be instrument as well as voice*
- ☞ *I did enjoy the juxtaposition of music with the natural sounds and silence.*

- Audience members were clearly transported by the experience of **dance** in the natural environment. However, whilst many show that they were conscious of the juxtaposition of composed music against natural sounds, and although some comment that the performance made them want to move themselves, few single out dance as an art form in its own right. Indeed, the danced parts of the performance are written about in terms that are heightened and poetic – even epiphanic – suggesting that audiences had been overwhelmed by the experience of watching dance in the environment and that they grasped such dance as part of a heightened experience of the natural world. For instance, one commentator refers to Natasha Fewings as a ‘[haunting] lost soul spirit’, whilst another refers to Nigel Stewart’s ‘mind blowing [...] wonderful interpretation of trees-growth age’, but neither makes mention of the fact they were watching meticulously choreographed dance!

- ☞ *The show really touched me. It was an amazing piece, really touched me, and makes me want to move outside! I loved the moments of surprise & melting into/emerging from the rocks*
- ☞ *Exquisite merging of artist with landscape, the desperation & suffering of the women lingered with me as we walked away. So powerful, outstanding*
- ☞ *Mind Blowing! Wonderful interpretation of trees-growth age*
- ☞ *Lost soul spirit of woman quite haunting/daunting. Very memorable. Her sensual experience of wet sand and mud.*
- ☞ *I think the man in tweed was the wood and trees and the woman in brown was the seashore. And the woman in white was the sea-white horses*
- ☞ *The girl who dances on the beach was interpreting the shipwreck very well.*
- ☞ *The dancer on the beach was extraordinary.*
- ☞ *Nigel Dancer, with the aspect of a trampy street drinker has put the thought into my mind that any bench sitter I pass in the future may well burst into dance.*
- ☞ *The dancer in the rock crevice seemed to defy gravity. Held by the rock, then lost in the enormity of the Bay.*

4.2 Audience’s general perception of the performance

- In general, audiences were continuously enthusiastic about the performance’s ability to inspire, the way in which it heightened aural, visual and tactile sensations and perceptions of place, and above all its ‘cinematic’ qualities

- ☞ *Energetic, amazing, absorbing, and very clever. It took me completely out of myself*
- ☞ *Engenders a real sensual awareness – both of the body, its limitations, its fragility and of the environment heighten acuity of perception.*
- ☞ *Physical memory through each sense heightened + infinitely memorable. Totally loved it. The senses were well structured.*
- ☞ *Ingenious framing of scenes*
- ☞ *The whole thing heightened my senses as to what was around me and it was a great experience and I loved the ending*
- ☞ *My hearing/ vision w[ere] really stimulated like the bat bit.*
- ☞ *It was poignant, atmospheric, crazy beautiful*
- ☞ *Atmospheric, thought providing, truly amazing.*
- ☞ *[A]lmost cinematic*
- ☞ *Fantastic cinematic images*
- ☞ *Beautiful cinematographic costume potential*

4.3 New audience engagement

- Table 4 below identifies respondents' frequency of attendance at performing arts events. Whilst 66% of the audience attended Theatre, Music or Dance performance events frequently, only 14% attended other rural or site specific performances frequently. This may well be to do with the infrequent staging of these type of events.
- However 27% of those responding had never attended a rural/site specific performance before suggesting that this had created a new audience for this type of performance.

Attended	Theatre, music, dance performance		Other rural, site-specific performance	
Frequently	116	66%	21	14%
Occasionally	56	32%	86	59%
Never	4	2%	39	27%
Total Answered	176	100%	146	100%

4.4 Audience impact on the Local Economy

Members of the audience used a range of local facilities and engaged in additional activities which will have had a positive impact on the local economy, for example

- sixty-seven people visited local Pubs, Cafes and Restaurants.
- Twenty-two people took a short break (staying at hotels and campsites).
- Members of the audience took the opportunity of visiting the area to take part in outdoor activities and to visit local tourist attractions.

Table 5 provides an overview of these activities and the numbers who engaged in them. Whilst it is not possible to quantify the economic impact of the show, there is evidence from other parts of the UK that ancillary spending by audience members does have a multiplier effect on the local economy (Comedia¹).

Facilities or activities	Number	Percentage
Pubs/ Cafes/ Restaurants	67	47%
Outdoor activities such as hiking/ climbing	22	15%
Short hotel break (one or two nights)	14	10%
Visiting local tourist attractions	12	8%
Other activities	12	8%
Shopping	11	8%
Camping	5	3%
Total	143	100%

¹ Bath and North East Somerset Arts Impact Assessment, Comedia (1999)

5. CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of conclusions that can be made in relation to the overall aims of the project

1. Astonishingly, nearly all of the respondents write about *Jack Scout* in passionate, even hallowed tones, clearly indicating that the show had provided a profoundly evocative and emotional experience that was at times overwhelming.
2. In relation to the area and its landscape:
 - a. There is extensive evidence to indicate that the performance did change the way in which people viewed the natural world: audience members repeatedly commented on how their aural, visual, tactile and kinaesthetic perception of the area had been powerfully charged by the performance, how they gained a much deeper appreciation of nature, and how their sense of well-being had been significantly heightened.
 - b. It was clear from the written comments that the way in which the natural world had been integrated into the performance was an important and irreplaceable part of it.
3. There was clear evidence that new audiences for rural site specific work had been developed through this project: 27% of respondents had never attended rural, site specific performances before.
4. Members of the audience clearly had a positive impact on the local economy, using hotels, cafes, restaurants, and pubs as well as visiting other local tourist attractions.
5. In relation to the audience:
 - a. The performance appealed to a wide age range; from under 16 years of age to over 65 years.
 - b. Over half the audience were from the local region (60%) but it did appeal to people outside of the North West of England.
 - c. A significant number of the audience (38%) were members of one or more of the National Trust, AONB and RSPB.
 - d. Direct mailing was the most effective way of attracting audiences to the event (although friends or family was also significant).