

## SADLERS SAMPLE EVALUATION: SUMMARY AUGUST 2013

### THE BRIEF

Our brief was to evaluate *Sadler's Sampled*: a two week festival developing ideas piloted previously on a smaller scale (a week end format). The evaluation measures Sadler's Wells' progress in audience growth and development – and changes in audience perceptions of dance and Sadler's Wells.

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology consists of:

- Conceptualisation using a logic model.
- Narrative account using our quality of experience framework.
- Online survey of audience members.
- In depth telephone survey of 60 audience members.
- Analysis of audience data.
- Possible survey of artists.

We had 808 replies to the online survey, which is an exceptionally good response for any sector. 777 arrived in time to be included in the analysis below. Response is self-selecting which gives a source of bias. Research suggests that online surveys are more likely to attract responses from people who have an opinion, but it is not correct to assume that these opinions are inevitably positive.

### SADLER'S SAMPLED REACHED NEW AUDIENCES

The booking data shows that 35% of audience members were new to Sadler's Wells. *Sampled* and *Hofesh Shechter* were particularly good at attracting new audiences, *Drumming* and *Made at Sadler's Wells* less so.

People who were new to Sadler's Wells were less likely to respond to the online survey. 27% of respondents to the online survey had been to Sadler's Wells one or twice, or never. Both of these groups could be considered as new audience members since they could have been to *Matthew Bourne* or a Christmas show, and it is an objective of *Sadler's Sampled* to bring such audiences to other experiences of dance.

*Sadler's Sampled* achieved audience sales of 67% capacity, which leaves room for growth in future years.

"I am new to dance and found this event completely educational and insightful. I have enjoyed researching all aspects of the performances. The samples left me wanting more."

"My friend and I had an awesome time! I had never been to the theatre or to watch dance performance before so it was such a treat! The ticket price was so cheap and the talent was amazing. I will definitely be coming back."

"For 'Sampled', I was stood between an older couple who had clearly never really seen hip-hop, and a young couple who hadn't really experienced ballet."

## SADLER'S WELLS WAS PERCEIVED AS A WELCOMING VENUE

All interviewees to the telephone survey said the building made them feel welcome. Comments referred to the openness, lightness, feeling of space, simple layout, informality and buzz. Everyone who noticed the staff said they were welcoming. Comments said that staff acknowledged respondents as they came in, were helpful, unpretentious and efficient.

"Sadler's Wells is open, clean and did not feel intimidating. The colour and atmosphere are warming. It is a place that anyone could see dance."

## THE SAMPLER PROGRAMME AND LOW PRICING WERE IMPORTANT

Respondents to the online survey said that the main attractions were the artists/programme (92%), the ticket pricing (85%), and the sampler format (71%).

Those who had never been to Sadler's Wells were more likely to have gone to Hofesh Shechter (48% of respondents who had never been to Sadler's Wells compared to 45% for those who had been more than twice). Those who had been to Sadler's Wells once or twice were more likely to have gone to Sampled (41% compared to 35% for those who had been more than twice). Those who had been more than twice were more likely to have gone to Made at Sadler's Wells (25% compared to 13% for those who had been once or twice, and 20% for those who had never been before). These differences show the complementarity of the programming in reaching new audiences, but also encouraging existing audiences to try new things.

"The overall atmosphere felt less formal and more casual. We could relax more in a kind of festival mood."

"Initially I came because of the cheap tickets, but I signed up for all the other events because of the fantastic quality and fascinating, novel styles displayed."

## SADLER'S SAMPLED CREATED A VERY HIGH QUALITY OF EXPERIENCE

93% of respondents to the online survey said that *Sadler's Sampled* was value for money. 92% said it was enjoyable. More than 80% said that it was memorable, thought provoking and relevant to them. Comments illustrated that different people have different preferences. This could be seen as an endorsement of the format of *Sadler's Sampled* as it allowed people to experiment with different choices.

89% of the respondents to the online survey described the quality of *Sadler's Sampled* as good or very good. Those who had been once or twice were particularly likely to describe the show as very good (81%, compared to 75% for those who had never been before and 67% of those who had been more than twice). This is perhaps because respondents need some basis for comparison to be confident in giving a reply.

93% of interviewees to the telephone survey felt free to make their own interpretation of the work, even if some felt there was an intended interpretation. Comments suggest that dance is seen as open to interpretation, or can be experienced without intellectualising, and that this is one thing that makes it particularly engaging.

There are some very vivid comments from respondents to the online survey, describing *Sadler's Sampled* as peak experiences.

"All six pieces were amazing. The diversity was fantastic and expanded your mind. There were different styles, a real mix of stuff."

"Hofesh Shechter's Political Mother is the most inspirational, intense show I have ever watched. This was the second time I watched it as I have already been overwhelmed by this experience at Sadler's Wells two years ago."

"The most breath-taking show I have ever seen at Sadler's Wells and I visit every week."

"I think Hofesh Shechter is the future of dance."

"Political Mother was incredible and to think some people saw it for only £8 is certainly value for money!"

"I still think about it. The energy (upbeat), quality, it was fantastic to enjoy sound and dance and no speaking. I took a guest from another country so there was no language barrier there so it was accessible to all."

#### THE PROMENADE FORMAT WAS A GREAT SUCCESS

25% of respondents to the online survey were standing. 31% of those who had never been to Sadler's Wells were standing. The promenade layout was a strong attraction to 51% of those standing and a slight attraction to 30% of those standing. 68% of those seated had no opinion on whether the promenade layout was positive or negative.

Those standing had even higher levels of satisfaction on all measures than those seated. 92% said that *Sadler's Sampled* was definitely enjoyable, 75% said it was definitely relevant to them, 68% said it was definitely thought provoking, 77% said it was definitely memorable, and 90% said it was definitely value for money.

The promenade format increased the social element of being in the audience. 38% of those standing said that the performance made them feel closer to other people, compared to 23% of those seated.

Respondents who were standing were particularly likely to describe *Sadler's Sampled* as very good quality (81%, compared to 67% of those seated).

86% of interviewees to the telephone survey who noticed the promenade layout said it enhanced the atmosphere.

"The promenade layout was a slight negative when I booked, but having been there and experienced it I loved it and now it would be a definite positive!"

"I appreciated that I could see the performance right in front, at such a good price. I could feel the energy and vibe of the performers."

“There was an intimacy and it was not regimented in a way that sitting is. You are closer and you feel freer to react in certain ways whereas when you are sitting you hold back.”

### SADLER'S SAMPLED INCREASED INTEREST IN FUTURE ATTENDANCE

58% of respondents to the online survey said that *Sadler's Sampled* made them more likely to come to other Sadler's Wells shows. 37% said they already come as much as they can. 88% of those who have never been to Sadler's Wells before, and 86% of those who have been once or twice, said that *Sadler's Sampled* made them more likely to come to Sadler's Wells. 48% of those who have come more than twice said that *Sadler's Sampled* made them more likely to come to Sadler's Wells, with 48% of this group saying they already come as much as they can.

82% of respondents to the online survey thought that *Sadler's Sampled* gave an introduction to dance such that those who like dance could bring their friends. Respondents commented on the relaxed atmosphere. We have one comment complaining that the branding around new audiences was annoying to existing audiences, but this is lower than we would usually receive for a festival aimed at new audiences.

70% of those who had never been to Sadler's Wells thought that *Sadler's Sampled* definitely met this purpose well (encouraging people who like dance to bring friends new to dance), compared to 55% of those who had been once or twice, and 45% of those who had been more than twice. The difference is partly because those who are more familiar with Sadler's Wells were less confident in expressing an opinion (there was a higher proportion of 'yes probably' rather than 'yes definitely' responses).

40% of respondents to the online survey said they brought friends who are new to dance with them to *Sadler's Sampled*. A further 25% said they would next time.

57% of interviewees to the telephone survey said that they had already looked at Sadler's Wells' website since going to *Sadler's Sampled*. 25% of interviewees (5% of new audience members) have already bought tickets to see a show at Sadler's Wells. 98% of respondents said that they planned to come to Sadler's Wells and to *Sadler's Sampled* in the future.

### THE AUDIENCE BACKGROUND WAS RELATIVELY BROAD

The age range is remarkably well spread between 20 and 64.

27% of respondents to the online survey saw dance twice or less last year.

63% of respondents to the online survey are not involved with the arts in their everyday work. This is a relatively high percentage for a leading arts venue.

Only 28% of respondents to the online survey described themselves as having specialist knowledge of the arts. This is relatively low. The figure for those who have never been to Sadler's Wells is slightly higher than that for those who have been more than twice (32% compared to 28%), which suggests that *Sadler's Sampled* was pulling in people from other art forms.

67% of respondents to the online survey described themselves as risk-taking in choosing which cultural events to attend.