



Scottish **Arts** Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION

It should be noted the views expressed in this evaluation are intended to represent, as far as possible, an objective aesthetic judgement. Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences.

Artist/Company:	Rob Drummond and Neil Doherty, part of Arches Live festival	
Venue:	Arches	
Title of Event:	Gag	
Type of Event:	performance	
Date of Visit:	21/09/2007	
Overall Rating:	Good An engaging piece that was structurally interesting and handled the subject matter without sentiment.	
Name: Jaine Lumsden	Date:08/10/2007	
Specialist Advisor	Scottish Arts Council Officer	<i>Please circle the relevant title</i>

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named above. 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 will form evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework and 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 Joint Board to report on the overall performance of its 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, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	Vision and imagination of work - Quality of ideas, skills in execution; if you've seen the work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on the comparison.	Good	The subject matter was not especially original but it was well-handled, and it was not immediately apparent where the story was leading.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned. If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.	Excellent	Part of Arches Live. "gives brave, exciting artists the rare and much-needed opportunity to take risks and try an array of experimental pieces." (from Arches brochure) A very wide range of work with an emphasis on enabling artists to try out new ideas. The quality of the individual pieces varied, but within this context this is entirely acceptable. Artistic experimentation inevitably involves a risk that the end result may not be successful, however without supporting this there would be no development of artform practice.
All	Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes. Education events – see ¹ below for guidance	Good	See above for success of event against festival aims. The Festival brochure notes don't state artistic aims as such, but a set-up for the content of the story (a man under a little girl's bed who is nice but frightens her.) This is an appropriate description.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Good	The performers seemed a little hesitant at the start but grew in confidence to give universally strong performances. The portrayals of the (younger) brother and sister were especially convincing.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc		n/a see under direction
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	By Rob Drummond. The subject matter was not new but was well handled with no sentiment or bathos. There was some good characterisation, especially of the 15 year old girl. It became apparent that two different times were being interspersed and that the two adults were the brother and sister simultaneously

¹ Education is a bridge between artform excellence and increased access and participation, and it is people centred. Providing opportunities for learning and progressing in an artform or using an artform to address other, non-artistic, outcomes are equally valid; in either case a high quality strategic approach is required in order to benefit the participants and the organisation. Delivery can be through workshops, post/pre-show discussions, outreach work, etc aimed at any age group.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			being portrayed by different actors. As an idea this is an interesting conceit, although I found it a little confusing at times. The scene towards the end when the father explains what has happened could have been more dramatic.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	By Neil Doherty. The space was used well and worked with the conceit of two different times being played simultaneously. Although the subject matter was quite grim, the use of humour was not only realistic, but added to the essential humanity of the characters.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.		
Dance, Theatre	Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.	Good	The set provided what was needed for the production (three different rooms in a house.) The lighting design was of good quality, used to delineate stage areas and otherwise quite simple but entirely appropriate. A relatively minor point: the projected shadow of a man lurking behind the girl's bed fitted the idea of a lurking presence, but was poorly executed.
All	<p>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang</p> <p>Education events - relevance/appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>	Competent	Professionally presented
All	<p>Audience</p> <p>Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit</p> <p>Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc</p>		Sold out (or nearly.) Good reaction.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	Additional Interpretative activity – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.	n/a	
All	Outcomes of education activity – what learning/skills development took place? What did participants take away with them? Are education resources being provided for follow up work? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum (formal or informal)?	n/a	

2. 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. Please try to view the venue and the services, and interpretative material as though you had never visited it before eg if you did not know the venue's location, how easy would it be to find your way there, and to find your way around once you had arrived?

Criteria	Comment
Suitability of the venue for the event	Entirely appropriate.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Festival brochure
Publicity/ pre-publicity – leaflets, posters, websites, etc. What is produced, is it easy to understand and where can you get the information? Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.	Festival brochure, Arches website (easy to navigate.)
Ease of booking and payment	No problems – bought Festival pass in person
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	.Fine – central location.
External signage and signposting	Fine
Internal directional signage	Fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Accessible
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Seemed appropriate
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Friendly front of house.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Acknowledged on Arches website and brochure

² In press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, company's website, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising, recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.) Where the event is publicised in the programme brochure of another organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

3. Organisation's Comments (optional)

This is the organisation's opportunity to respond to points raised within this assessment. Please do not feel obliged to fill this section in. In the spirit of the Quality Framework, we would ask that any comments are self-evaluating, providing an insight as to why, if there is, a major disagreement of response between the organisation and the evaluation, in a constructive way.

This will not alter the rating given by the assessment, but will allow the organisation the opportunity to give their opinion/feedback. The Scottish Arts Council reserves the right to edit comments if they are deemed to be libellous or defamatory.

As the Scottish Arts Council implements the Quality Framework internally, we intend to publish artistic evaluations on organisations that we support regularly on our website. The final artistic evaluation, including the organisation's response will be published on a quarterly basis on our website.

Please keep your response to max 500 words. If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.