



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: *DUNDEE REP THEATRE & NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND*

Venue: *DUNDEE REP*

Title of Event: *PEER GYNT*

Type of Event: *(e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)*

THEATRE PERFORMANCE

Date of Visit: *5TH OCTOBER 2007*

Overall Rating (Please rate the event 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. If the management of the event affects the overall enjoyment of the event, please comment, but the overall rating should be based on the artistic merit of the event.)

Excellent

Peer Gynt is a truly impressive co-production. It is certainly conceived and executed to an extremely high standard. The only concern I have is that given it is such an extraordinary production it is a shame more hasn't been made of it. The adaptation is as impressive as the production but I think it could have been slightly more radically and ruthlessly adapted.

Name: *Stephen Stenning*

Date: *15/10/2007*

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please tick the relevant title

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	<p>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.</p>	<i>Excellent</i>	<p><i>A combination of the best of the National Theatre of Scotland and of Dundee Rep. It is a breathtakingly imaginative. The extra rehearsal time and resources put into this production has resulted in real invention from all the artists involved director, designer, actors and musicians.</i></p>
All	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	<i>Excellent</i>	<p><i>It is a really impressive element t the NTOS and Dundee Rep programme. It is an ideal vehicle for the Rep's Ensemble Company and for director Dominic Hill. It unites young actors from RSAMD with Scotland's leading acting companies and displays the extremely high production values that have become expected of NTOS.</i></p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	<i>Good</i>	<p><i>Colin Teevan was asked to adapt Peer Gynt because no existing version was “radical enough”. That aim was spectacularly achieved. In fact, the world he creates for the play is so exciting that I wanted the adaptation to be more radical and a little less true. In the programme, mention is made of the additional time and resources that the co-production with the NTOS and the involvement of RSAMD brought to this production. The aim was clearly to create a production of extraordinary quality. That was also undeniably achieved. It was a production for Scottish theatre to be proud of. Part of NTOS's mission is to “reinvigorate existing theatre-goers”. The production was invigorating and the audience's reaction demonstrated that it also achieves that goal. Another one of NTOS's aims is to “build a new generation of theatre-goers”. It was a shame that the audience was surprisingly small and (unusually for Dundee Rep) appeared to be mainly committed theatre-goers. The publicity perhaps gave too much emphasis to the ‘course language’ and the fact that it is a ‘classic’. It is such an extraordinary production that it should have been packed out and drawing that “new generation of theatre-goers” in to the theatre because, other than perhaps being a little long, it is the perfect production to demonstrate the inspirational power, immediacy and excitement of theatre. It is such an artistic triumph that more should be made of it and planned for it.</i></p>

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

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>The standard of the performance skills was remarkably high the join between Dundee rep's regular ensemble and the additional performers (including those from RSAMD) was not noticeable. It seemed to invigorate the regular Rep actors as much as e it did the additional performers. There were some wonderful performances particularly Keith Fleming as young Peer Gynt.</i>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	<i>Good</i>	<i>Janet Smith added some exhilarating dancing and skillfull choreography to the production. She got the best out of the big cast that obviously included a range of abilities. A key element of the production was the energy and the physicality and in the relatively few dance routines she used the talents of the more able cast members (particularly Anthony Missen) to great effect. It was a shame that as it is such a full production there wasn't more room for dance and movement pieces.</i>
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	<i>Good</i>	<i>Colin Teevan's translation is brilliantly raw, vital and energetic yet still beautifully poetic. In the first half the pace is so relentless that it makes the more reflective sections in the second half seem relatively ponderous. In the programme Colin Teevan asks "how do you make trolls work in modern day England". His answer was to create a world in which the trolls and the other elements grounded in Norwegian myth (such as the Button Moulder) fitted at times almost seamlessly with crude, witty, grotesque very modern characterisations and images of 'modern Scotland'</i> <i>What then did not seem to fit so well with that raucous part mythical - part real world, was old Peer Gynt's tortured introspection and self-analysis. It felt as if the second half could have been more ruthlessly adapted as sections were a little hard to follow (although I have to confess the same could be said for other translations I have seen).</i>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Dominic hill made superb use of the time, talents and resources at his disposal. Every idea was exploited to its fullest. It was an extraordinarily rich, inventive, imaginative and thrilling production. At times it was quite breathtaking. The trolls for example – were completely trolls with their own physicality but they were at the same time disturbingly human. It is a superb piece of theatricality.</i>

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
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Paddy Cunneen's score is a really powerful element of the adaptation because it is worked in to the production so skilfully. It provides both a dramatic underscore and an injection of brutal rock and roll energy into the action. I'm sure it is absolutely the type of music that trolls listen to. There can not be a better example of the use of heavy rock in 'classic' theatre.</i>
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.	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Again the design was excellent. The set is simple and uncluttered and ideal for the epic nature of the production. The costumes are pleasingly grimy and seedy and the trolls are grotesquely magical. In particular King bastard is a wonderful example of applying mythical proportions to a filthy out of condition ageing biker.</i>
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>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>It was a very full that must have been challenging to run but the technical presentation was excellent - nothing got in the way of the relentless pace of the piece. It appeared to be cued perfectly.</i>
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>	XXX	<p><i>As mentioned above the audience was not large (probably 250 – 300 on a Friday night). It was slightly disappointing to hear so much interval chat about 'whether the course language was justified' and how the adaptation measured up to other Peer Gynt's. I think the production is an ideal one for reaching out to young audiences and to irregular theatre goers who could be seduced by the raucous drunken wedding celebrations in Tay Square before the performance and the music, the spectacle and the quad-biking trolls during it.</i></p> <p><i>The audience seemed to be made up of those who knew what to expect from Peer Gynt. Hat said they were very enthusiastic with a small number standing to applaud at the end.</i></p>
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.	<i>Competant</i>	<i>There is some very good information in the programme including a timeline for Ibsen'd life, an article about Ibsen and an interview with Colin Teevan. That said, there was not much sign of other activity such as talk's or workshops.</i>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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)?		<i>N/A</i>

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.

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	<i>It was a very big show for the venue but it fitted perfectly. The stage was completely opened up and all the wing space was used as was the depth of the stage. The theatre (inside and out) was used well so it felt entirely suitable.</i>
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	<i>The programme was very good indeed but there was very little else to clue you in to what you were about to see.</i>
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.	<i>I used both the NTOS and the Dundee Rep websites both were very clear and easy to use.</i>
Ease of booking and payment	<i>Very efficient.</i>
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	<i>It is difficult for me to say as if it is easy to find as I know it so well. It is near the town centre and not far from train station.</i>
External signage and signposting	<i>Good. There are a number of signs if you approach by car, train or from the town.</i>
Internal directional signage	<i>Reasonably good (again I know the building well anyway)</i>
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	<i>Good.</i>
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	<i>The timing was good. It is a very full play and a full production so it is quite long.</i>
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	<i>All the staff were efficient and helpful.</i>
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	<i>SAC Logo is prominent on the programme and also in the venue.</i>

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.