



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: Right Lines in association with Mull Theatre

Venue: Lochinver Hall, Lochinver

Title of Event: The Accidental Death of an Accordionist

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

Date of Visit: July 23rd 2008

Overall Rating: Good

This was a very enjoyable evening for me to see this show which for years I had heard so much about in my travels over the Highlands. To see it in Lochinver Village Hall made it extra special since it is an ideal location for this show, add to this that it was a full house and had such a great audience response to the show and it was very definitely a good night at the theatre. This show is a fun production, it barrels along, it has a good cast and live Scottish dance band. The whole idea is simple but very effective – it portrays on stage many of the issues of small community living and the characters to be found in the Highlands of Scotland, but locates them in a fun murder mystery ceilidh - so it really catches the imagination of the regular and probably more crucially the irregular theatre-goer. The house that night had a very large percentage of locals rather than a more typical summer audience of tourists on holiday looking for entertainment of some kind. The only thing that holds it back from an Excellent rating is the need for a little more control in the directing style which would encourage a more intense performance style and a little more follow through on the ideas that are in the script. Things feel just a little unexplored – which maybe seems strange in such a wild and wonderful blast of a show. More, give us just a bit more.

(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.)

Name: __Alexandria Patience__ Date: _12_/ 08 /__2008__

Specialist Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please circle 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>	Good	<p>I loved the response from the audience – the full house, the idea behind the production as a whole, the touring spread – lots and lots of things really work and are captivating. There is so much there that is a dream to play and know that the audience will jump on the band wagon with you – the little niggles for me were little but would have stitched it all together and made it seamless. The raffle wasn't really a raffle – only a few people had the chance to get tickets – yet the cast were around the audience from the moment the house opened. A local charity could be selected to give the money to or given to the arts committee putting on the event... there should be a way around having folk confused. I heard raffle and dived for my bag – nothing happens in the north without a raffle! The dancing was great but it was tentative – it seemed there were concerns about how many could go up and strangely the cast seemed to be choosing the same people as dance partners. A few "I'll be seeing you later for a dance..." at the beginning could have made the cast feel connections had been made they could follow through on – someone not at the edge could be asked and if it takes them forever to get out – who hasn't gotten to the dance floor just as the music ends? I felt that things could have been taken a bit further. This piece gives tons of opportunities.</p>
All (if relevant)	<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>	Excellent	<p>As a part of the Lochinver season it works well in a programme more heavily weighted to music during their summer season programme - So Mull Theatre, comedian Bruce Fummey and Siyaya: the song and dance troupe from Zimbabwe are the non-music events in the listing of 12 - and indeed they have managed to make a small amount of profit on this particular production. As a part of Right Lines and Mull Theatre programme it is good to see these companies joining forces to present this show together. Within the Mull Theatre season of four productions though this is one of three re-mounts – Katie Morag from a couple of years ago, Macbeth the final show in the Mull Little Theatre venue and the much acclaimed, The Accidental Death of an Accordionist. The only new production but it is with a new script is Peter Arnott's Swindle and Death. Perhaps this says as much about the state of theatre in Scotland as about the choices of Mull Theatre though.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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	Excellent	It says ‘The legendary comedy ceilidh murder mystery theatre show’ and basically bills itself as a fun Highland romp and that is exactly what it is.
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	Range of ages and experience levels but all worked well for the roles they were cast in.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	n/a	No real choreography.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Excellent	Excellent idea. Script blends a murder mystery, comedy and a ceilidh into one event which works incredibly well
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Competent	Pace and tone of the show worked well although I think the show would have worked better if they had played it slightly more seriously and allowed the audience to find the humour themselves but the light spoof approach appeared to work very well for the majority of the audience so...but there were a couple of comments from audience members that I heard though which seems some attending agreed with me. The first half hour which is prior to the ‘show’ starting is really the beginning of the show and I wonder how much of this is scripted or worked to set-up the rest of the production. Some very nice touches in the signs outside and the idea of everything beginning before it begins... Trust the idea – it’s a beaut! Cast were excellent – well cast for the roles involved.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Excellent	The live traditional Scottish music provided a strong element of the show as a whole – since there were even audience countrydance interludes - Sandy Brechin, Annie Grace and the rest of the band were excellent. This added a great free, fun element that the audience loved and it kept the whole show moving along.

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
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	Good but I did get a little confused as to which year we were in... seemed like some were contemporary and others perhaps in the 80's or 70's. Set and lighting were minimal but absolutely fine for this show. The set-up of having the audience on three sides worked well – especially for the ceilidh conceit and access to dancing.
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>	Good	I really enjoyed most of the show although the down side of a village hall is that visibility can be tricky and I was unfortunately at the back of the hall so missed feeling truly engaged with the show until I accepted that I had to stand to see some of it. All other areas of tech went well.
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>		Full packed hall with a large turn out of locals – obviously very excited to see the show again or get the chance of seeing it after hearing about the previous tour. Very positive reaction by the audience. Approximately 120-130 in the house
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	None of which I am aware.
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	None of which I am aware.

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	Fabulous – village hall is the ideal venue for the show
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Good full colour programme available to be purchased with info on all the relevant groups and people. A very fun addition to the show is the handing out of the free 6 page Newsletter called Glengirnie Gazette with spoof community news, contests and all the usual small community newspaper items and focussed on the characters in the show.
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.	A very good full colour poster – eye catching design, good size and giving a bit of a feel for the show. Same image used for a flyer but it has a blanket phrase for the tour and the main focus is to publicise the Edinburgh Fringe show. Good basic Highland promotion outwith the area – by the theatre company - in the other locations the show is touring. The Lochinver Arts Committee do a one sheet print out which gives the upcoming Arts Calendar – this one runs from May – Sept 2008 listing all the upcoming events. Music, theatre, dance and comedy. There is a local phone number available for Any Queries to ring Alex
Ease of booking and payment	Tickets are bought on the door – so turning up a little ahead of time ensured my seat. This show was absolutely sold out so there was some manoeuvring of chairs to get everyone in.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Most of the audience will have driven or walked to the hall and it is easy to find.
External signage and signposting	Very easy to find – in the centre of the village on the only road going through.
Internal directional signage	Village hall – no problems in locating anything
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	A village hall with adequate provision for disabled access – the disability toilet in entrance hall
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Yes
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very friendly and personable

Criteria	Comment
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Yes – clearly credited

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.