



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: Pitlochry Rep

Venue: Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Title of Event: Wild Honey

Type of Event: Theatre Performance.

Date of Visit: 23/06/08

Overall Rating: Good

This was a very good production production of Michael Frayn's "Wild Honey"; though occasionally lacking in pace, it had some genuinely beautiful visual and comic moments. But it is rightly billed as a "Dangerously sweet comedy", for like the featured railway line, real desperation and tragedy runs all the way through it.

Name: **Stewart Ennis** Date: 24/06/08 **Specialist Advisor**

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	There are some beautiful visual and comic moments. Like the featured rail track, real tragedy and desperation run constantly and effectively alongside those strong farcical elements also associated with Frayn and Chekhov. Only occasionally did it appear to be lacking in pace.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.	Excellent	This is part of Pitlochry's summer season of good quality drama. This show fits very well into the repertoire.
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	The programme describes this as “Dangerously Sweet Comedy” and this it most certainly is, being simultaneously farcical and tragic. And here, as often with Chekhov, it is the –relatively unexplored- lives of it's minor characters that leave us feeling deeply troubled.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Excellent	A fine ensemble of actors who all gave distinct performances and all played in a style quite appropriate to the piece.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Good	There was some stage business; use of drunken movement/stage falls and rolls all of which were handled very well.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Excellent	Michael Frayn's script (from Chekhov's “play without a name”) has been tried and tested many times and seems here to be as wicked, witty... and tragic as ever.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	The casting seemed entirely appropriate throughout. Only occasionally, on this particular night, the pace seems a little too leisurely. Particularly effective was the balancing of the farcical comedy with the often deeply troubling sense of sadness and tragedy that ran through the piece.

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	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Good	The little music that was present was effective appropriate,
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.	Excellent	The series of naturalistic sets, the period costume and make up , together with lovely use of lighting, all evoked perfectly the fading grandeur and midsummer madness. The forest scenes in particular were beautifully atmospheric and the railway finale was suitably thrilling and dramatic.
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Excellent	All sound and lighting cues were carried out smoothly and unobtrusively.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		The audience were engaged and appreciative throughout, responding well to the humour of the piece.
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.	NA	Nothing to comment on this evening, but there are a series of post show discussions and master classes taking place throughout the season.
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	See above for master classes and post show discussions. Pitlochry have a wide range of activities for members of the public of all ages.

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	Perfectly suited to this event.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Highly visible displays and appropriate throughout. Good quality brochure programme.
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.	Posters and leaflets and Pitlochry website were useful and easy to negotiate,
Ease of booking and payment	Online booking smooth.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easy to get to from anywhere in town.
External signage and signposting	Good and clear.
Internal directional signage	Good and clear.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Suitable, from what I could see.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Quite appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Friendly and helpful.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC acknowledged where appropriate.

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.