



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company: Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Venue: Pitlochry Festival theatre

Title of Event: Whisky Galore

Type of Event: Theatre/Musical

Date of Visit: 18th July 2009

Overall Rating: Excellent

This was both a big wonderfully witty feel good musical and a sharp but gentle satire. The audience seemed to applaud every single song and dance and laugh out loud at the constant stream of jokes. The large company were strong throughout, singing, dancing and often playing instruments with real pleasure and élan.

Name: Stewart Ennis

Date: 20th July 2009

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 on 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 future 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:

Very poor- standard falls well below what is acceptable.

Poor - not well conceived and executed

Satisfactory

Good - well conceived and executed

Very Good – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

Excellent – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Excellent	This show drew from Compton Mackenzie's book rather than the film and so the gentle but effective Catholic/Protestant sectarian satire has been reintroduced. The song and dance routines were always a pleasure and never at the expense of character and the story. The ever shifting large scale set was always impressive but never overwhelmed actors or audience.
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Excellent	This was PFT's first commissioned musical and on this particular night the reaction was overwhelmingly positive. This seems to fit very well into PFT's summer season of Scottish work, which has been designed to fit into the <i>Homecoming 2009</i> initiative. Following its success, it would be no surprise if it tried its hand at other musicals.
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate e.g. from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	Excellent	<p>The decision to use the original book as the source meant that the catholic/protestant interfaith satire, missing from the film could be reintroduced. While the satire was never less than gentle, it was also effective and gave this musical an edge that the film lacked. If there was any <i>kitsch-ness</i>, a danger in a show like this, it was knowingly done and nicely undermined.</p> <p>This musical version of <i>Whisky Galore</i> has been around as an idea for several years, and it seems the ideal choice in terms of style and content, for PTF to choose as its first ever musical.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Excellent	The audience were engaged throughout; each larger than life character's individual quirk of personality being instantly recognized, and appreciated. Everyone performed with a huge amount of energy and pleasure which was reflected in the audiences generous reactions throughout. All professional cast who sang, danced and played instruments throughout, and all to a very high standard.
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the work original? How was the space used? How many dancers were there and how were they used? How long was the piece? 	Excellent	The choreography by Rita Henderson was both wild and subtle with the big numbers in particular showing the all round strength of the acting/singing/instrument playing performers. Choreography seemed at all times to fit well with the general atmosphere of the piece, adding to the richness of the character and narrative.

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
Theatre	<p>Script</p> <p>Please comment on this for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 	Excellent	<p>The book was written by Shona McKee McNeil and captured perfectly the individual quirks and personality traits of island life. There was a steady stream of lovely jokes throughout which added to the life of character and not one missed the target. As mentioned above, any kitsch-ness was 'knowing' and usually appropriately and effectively undermined by a clever follow up. The decision to resort to Mackenzie's novel as source material seemed right, with the interfaith conflict adding edge and depth to the piece.</p>
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	Excellent	<p>The spirit of the original text (from personal recollection) has been preserved and brought wildly to life. All performers seemed well cast with characters well defined throughout. The presentation seemed spot on, with good variation in pace. The atmosphere created was one of pleasure and élan; appropriate to the nature of this particular piece.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	Excellent	<p>The songs (music and lyrics by Ian Hammond Brown) were strong, exuberantly witty and, on occasion, moving. They lifted the production and allowed the already larger than life characters to be even more themselves.</p> <p>That the music was played live by Musical director Jon Beales, and members of the cast only added to the joyful Ceilidh atmosphere of the piece.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc). 	Excellent	<p>Costumes worked extremely well, allowing easy delineation of characters. Lighting effectively added to the changing atmosphere of the piece. A slight niggle was the introduction of the two modern looking guitars, which <i>seemed</i> out of place, but perhaps only because all else was in well in keeping with the period of the piece.</p> <p>The ever shifting set was full of delightful surprises, with rowing boats and, especially, the dramatic arrival of the wrecked ship itself.</p> <p>Sound and lighting cues seemed spot on throughout and set changes were brief and unobtrusive.</p>
	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances 	Excellent	<p>The production seemed to be aimed at a general family audience, of all ages, and indeed there were children there at this particular performance and they seemed engaged throughout.</p> <p>The age range of the audience was broad, from (as mentioned) children, to the elderly, including some wheelchair users. This production was definitely appropriate to the above audience members.</p> <p>The auditorium was almost full on this particular night.</p> <p>The audience were engaged throughout, applauding each and every song and dance and laughing at the endless stream of jokes.</p> <p>Certainly (as mentioned above) there was a visibly, a broad age range and several wheel chair users;</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event e.g. workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? 		<p>however, the audience did not seem to be particularly culturally diverse.</p> <p>Audio description is offered on request but subject to availability.</p> <p>There are a series of <i>Whisky Galore</i> post show talks and backstage tours, but not on this particular evening.</p>

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
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it easy to find? • Is it on a main transport route? • Are the spaces clean? • What were the sight lines like? • How big was it? 	<p>The theatre is easy to reach by car or foot from Pitlochry's centre.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? • Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>Posters, flyers, brochures were visible throughout. The PTF website is full of useful information and easy to negotiate.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? • What publicity materials are produced? • Is it easy to understand? • Where can you get the information? • Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>The website was live weeks before the show and full of useful information which is easy to use and understand.</p> <p>The programme was available at the entrance to the theatre and contained useful background info to the show and its source material.</p> <p>SAC is acknowledged where appropriate.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>Booking by internet was quick and easy.</p>

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.

Criteria	Comment																
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	The timing of the event seemed quite appropriate for a big musical like this.																
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	External and Internal signage visible and effective. Was not aware of Braille signage																
Access and provision for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event Please add in any additional comments below the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 510 1252 1032"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>No</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>No</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>No</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="571 1070 1262 1205">My understanding from talking to box office is that audio description is potentially available for all shows but advance notice must be given and is subject to availability of 'describers'.</p>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No	Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	No
	Yes/No		Yes/No														
BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No														
Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes														
Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	No														
Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	Box office and catering staff were always friendly over phone and in person.																

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.