



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: Lyceum company

Venue: Lyceum

Title of Event: The Glass Menagerie

Type of Event: performance of Tennessee Williams play.

Date of Visit: 07.02.08

Overall Rating: Good

Nothing to really complain of in a sound production with excellent actors, but there was a lack of depth and intensity overall which gave the sense of a gap in context. Set design was misconceived, clumsy and unsubtle. A large audience seemed to particularly enjoy the second half.

Nothing to be ashamed of in this production – a quality addition to the Lyceum's season.

Name: SYLVIA DOW Date: 14 / 02 / 08

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	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	A sound and quite telling production of the play rather than a highly innovative or visionary one. But none the worse for that – the play perhaps does not lend itself to too much innovation. But it was all well done and skilled in execution. An example of the good quality of work currently on show at the Lyceum.
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.	good	A Lyceum in-house production part of the main Winter season
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	In the programme the Director states her wish to “ explore in more depth what happens to them (the characters) personally and says’ I think that they (audiences) are able to relate to that more than an idea of the American Dream. Of course the American Dream is important...but I think I can explore in more depth what happens to them personally.’ I believe that this stratum of the play was indeed well explored – that we came to know and care about the characters very well but the result was that there was a big gap in the production in terms of the context historical, personal and societal in which Tennessee Williams set his play. And this is great loss in terms of both the drama and its intensity.
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	The acting was of very high standard from all 4 players. On this particular evening there was a small but difficult element in the audience – a school party who behaved mischievously eg reacting every time the word ‘gay ‘ was used – and it is a credit to these 4 rather fine actors that they did not lose focus once. Although the acting was uniformly of good quality a particular mention should go to Anthony Eden playing the Gentleman Caller. In the 6 or so productions of this play this assessor has seen this was the best portrayal of this character by far – subtle, believable and many-layered.

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	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	N/A	
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	N/A	A well - known play one of the best known of Tennessee Williams' oeuvre, but since no changes had been made to it – nor would be appropriate - no comment is necessary.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	good	As noted above the production leaned rather too heavily on the narrative and characters without placing them in context. The production was soundly put together and enjoyable to watch, absorbing and engaging with the touches of humour well brought out. It was just a little shallow for this assessor's taste. An exception was the scene between the Gentleman Caller and Laura which was beautifully directed and exceptionally well acted with great depth of feeling delicately communicated. One thing which grated was the use of the actors to move various pieces of stage furniture. Always difficult to bring off successfully there were one or two occasions where this was very clumsy eg when Laura, ostensibly a delicate flower with a disability, had to bring on a folded day bed and unfold it in readiness for the next scene. These occasions also had the effect of slowing the action unnecessarily
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	N/A	There was sound design used atmospherically but no music as such.
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.	competent	Costuming was appropriate and worked well. The set was a bit of a sore thumb. Firstly it didn't work in practical terms. The 'terrace' (which is actually the fire escape given grandiosity by the mother) was so placed that actors had to exit down into the pit and then come up onto DSL again to make the actual exit. But the design was the thing which really did not work – there was so much broken window, wall and plaster that it was confusing and distracting, and also a bit like hitting a peach with a hammer – this family is broken and dysfunctional! The lighting was very good indeed – atmospheric and subtle
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang Education events - relevance/	excellent	Technical presentation was of the high quality one might expect from the Lyceum . The set was as always built to exacting standards and the lighting and sound cues glitch-free.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.		
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>		<p>Good. The audience as noted earlier had a difficult element and also a group of sponsors who seemed more interested in their drinks than the play in the first half. Despite this everyone seemed to enter into the play by the second half and the response was enthusiastic.</p> <p>I would estimate an 85% of capacity house</p>
All	<p>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.</p>	N/A	
All	<p>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)?</p>	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	Excellent.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	All of these well represented.
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 was aware of leaflets, website, brochures and posters. The website is helpful and easy to negotiate
Ease of booking and payment	No problem and staff were helpful and friendly
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Central in Edinburgh and well signposted despite access being obscured by Usher Hall ongoing works, scaffolding and boarding.
External signage and signposting	All good and well designed
Internal directional signage	Again very clear
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	All in place but it's an old theatre so some compromises.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Just right – started and finished on time.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Staff are friendly and helpful
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	All in place on posters, flyers, programmes and website

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.