



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: Royal Lyceum Theatre

Venue: Royal Lyceum Theatre

Title of Event: Living Quarters

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

Theatre

Date of Visit: 7 November 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.)

Overall Rating – Good

Brian Friel's 1977 play is revived here in a Scottish premiere (there has been a production in Bristol previously directed by Andrew Hilton for Show of Strength Theatre Company in 1991). The drama centres around Frank, a widowed army officer returning from a peace keeping mission to discover that his new young wife has been having an affair with his son. The action is conjured up by Sir, the narrator. Although the play itself is slightly flawed, and not one of Friel's masterpieces; this production is well directed by John Dove. Some might argue that the flaws are probably the reason why this play has not received productions in Scotland before.

Dove's clear direction makes good use of Michael Taylor's imaginative set. There are some excellent performances particularly from Ron Donachie as Frank whose moving interpretation of the army officer cannot fail to leave the audience touched. John Dove has drawn out great performances from the rest of the cast too.

At the matinee performance I attended, the audience was largely made up of senior citizens who were all engaged. Comments amongst the audience afterwards were all positive. The helpful and friendly welcome from front of house staff also contributed to an enjoyable experience for all.

Name: Sita Ramamurthy

Date: 12 November 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	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	Although traditional in its execution, the quality of work was very good, well put together, excellent performances, clear direction and a delightful set.
All	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	Interesting choice to revive this 1977 play which is an absorbing study of family relationships. It fitted well with the Lyceum's repertoire of classics and new writing and this production compliments the rest of the season's work. The production claims it is the UK premiere. In fact there was a production in Bristol in the 1990s making this the Scottish premiere.
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	Well executed event which fulfils the Lyceum's stated aims.
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	All performances were very good. Of particular note was Ron Donachie who gave a flawless performance as Frank and Katie McGuinness who was excellent as Anna. All the cast were engaging and truthful
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	Brian Friel's original text.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Superbly and precisely directed by John Dove working with a good cast who were right for their roles. The production was moving and exquisite in its execution. John Dove drew excellent performances from his cast and made good use of the set.

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.	Competent	Sound effects were fine. Nothing particular to report
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	Michael Taylor's imaginative set on a revolve supported this production.
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>	Excellent	The quality of presentation was very good indeed. Technically accomplished.
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>		Appeared to be full house mostly of senior citizens who were fully engaged throughout the performance. The general comments made after the performance were all positive, "I really enjoyed that, that was superb, very good"
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>	Competent	A programme was available with an essay an interpretative essay by Owen Dudley Edwards which was adequate.
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	Standard theatre production in an appropriate venue
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programmes were available and prominently displayed reviews
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.	Leaflets and posters were informative. The website is OK, nothing outstanding.
Ease of booking and payment	Easy to book
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Centrally located and easy to find.
External signage and signposting	Fine (though the road works obscured signage)
Internal directional signage	Fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Wheelchair access available
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Standard matinee timing
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC was acknowledged appropriately

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.