



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 COMPANY
Venue:	THE ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE EDINBURGH
Title of Event:	THE WINTER'S TALE
Type of Event: (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	THEATRE PERFORMANCE
Date of Visit:	11TH OCTOBER 2007
<p>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.)</p> <p>Good. I found it difficult to grade because it was not a production that was lacking in any way – nothing was less than competent and some of the performances, elements of the design and the direction were good. On the whole it was artistically well executed but the elements of the production could have been more inventively brought together to create a more exceptional whole.</p>	
Name: STEPHEN STENNING Date: 26/10/2007	
Specialist Advisor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scottish Arts Council Officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Please tick the relevant title</i>	

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.	Competent	It was a very clean straightforward production. All elements of it were professionally executed. It was not however a particularly imaginative or inventive production that brought a clear interpretation to the piece.
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	Opening the season with a Shakespeare is well established part of the Lyceum's programming and The Winter's Tale was a good choice. It is relatively rarely performed and a not a play that is easily reduced. It therefore felt like a good piece for the Lyceum to be presenting and a strong start to a winter season. It also contrasts and balances well with other productions in the season like Living Quarters and The Glass Menagerie.
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	Competent	The website and the programme set the production up as delivering an “outstanding Shakespeare play that is rarely performed in Scotland” with a multi-talented creative team and some of Scotland's leading actors. The elements were there; - it was a talented creative team including Robin Don, Philip Pinsky, Malcolm Shields and Mark Thomson with impressive actors and a ‘fabulous tale of love jealousy, suspicion, rage and beauty’. Everybody did their job well and the different elements of the production worked without creating anything significantly new or lending a real sense of innovation or invention.
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	Liam Brennan gave a really commanding performance as the Leontes and was as compelling in his growing jealous rage as he was when tormented with remorse. Generally there were no weak performances and some very strong ones from the more established members of the accomplished cast. Una McLean was formidable as Paulina and Peter Kelly and Robin Laing created some good comic moments as the Shepherds.

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	Competent	There were only a few moments of Malcolm Shields' choreography. In the Shepherd's Cottage scene the dancing worked and was competent but not particularly exciting or exuberant.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	N/A	The script was not adapted or substantially changed.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Competent	It was a production unhindered by gimmicks that made the play's "welter of anachronisms" relatively easy to follow. Nothing was thrown away or glossed over. That said, it was not a very inventive production with very few surprises (although the statue scene was well done and particularly moving). It was also very static (which I admit may well have contributed to the clarity) and in places it lacked pace.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Good	There was not a great use of music but where it came in it was effective and there were some extremely good sound effects particularly the foreboding storm-like sounds that accompanied the change at the end of Act 2. Again, the music did not seem to be really worked into the whole.
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	The stark white box set, that originally looked uninteresting and a little obvious as Leontes' palace, turned out to hold some surprises and yielded some interesting scene changes. It was cleverly designed and broke impressively as the lives of those at court were torn apart by the deaths. However, beyond the 'breaking apart' and cleverly providing for the prison scene it did not give much to Bohemia or the pastoral scenes. The court costumes were also interesting. They were basically modern (the men wearing suits) with stylised white splatterings on the shoulders. It was effectively done and there looked to be a clear concept behind it but I was not sure how it was used in the production. For the characters outside the Sicilian Court the design concept was less obvious.
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	Good	The technical presentation was very efficient. There were some significant scene changes that were very slick. The sound and lighting cues all seemed smooth.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	Education events - relevance/ 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>		There was a reasonable audience on the Thursday evening when I attended. It is a difficult theatre at which to assess audience numbers, but it was neither a full audience not a disappointing one. The audience members I was aware of were regular theatre goers and appeared to have other 'Winter's Tale's' to compare the production to. There were also a number of young people on school/college trips. The audience was definitely attentive and also appreciative. The comic scenes were particularly enthusiastically received.
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.	Excellent	There was an impressive list of events including schools work and interpretive worked specifically targeted at adults. The Lyceum offers pre-show talks; post show discussions; a drama workshop for adults; an open theatre talk and a tailored session for the regular theatre group. The work that had been done to target schools had a very obvious impact as there were a number of school groups in attendance.
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)?	Not Known	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	The production was obviously tailor-made and it was an ideal production for the Lyceum to be tackling.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	The programme included a very thorough and up to date piece about The Winter's Tale by Michael Ridings. I was not aware of any displays.
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.	The website was very clear and provided all the necessary information – as did the brochure. The brochure was easy to get hold of and I was able to pick one up in Glasgow!
Ease of booking and payment	Very easy! I telephoned and the box office had my ticket ready for payment and collection.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	The Lyceum is relatively easy to find by public transport – I usually walk from Haymarket station. On this occasion I drove and parking proved surprisingly easy.
External signage and signposting	I think there is a sign when you reach Lothian Road. A friend recently had to find it from Waverley Station and needed to telephone.
Internal directional signage	Reasonably good, although I found myself asking some very helpful front of house staff on a couple of occasions.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Very good. There are lifts to all levels. The signs for the disabled toilets are clear. There was also clear information about signed performances and the audio described performances.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Very good – clear information about the length of the play and the time it was due to end.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	All the staff were very friendly and helpful and seemed to be well briefed.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	The Scottish Arts Council and the Scottish Arts Council Lottery Fund logos appear on page 1 of the programme. The SAC logo appears on the 'Home' page of the website. Acknowledgements are also very prominent in the building itself.

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.