



Scottish Arts Council

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:	Bind Productions
Venue:	Theatre Workshop
Title of Event:	A (gay disabled transexual) love story told to a ticket inspector at Alton Towers
Type of Event:	Performance
Date of Visit:	18 Aug 07
Overall Rating:	Poor

This piece certainly succeeded in being funny at times and received a very warm reaction from the audience. However, I felt the overall quality of text, direction and performances was not of an adequately high standard. Unfortunately, the ways in which the piece dealt with issues of social exclusion in relation to disability, sexuality and gender was predictable and pedestrian on both a social and theatrical level.

Name: David Leddy

Date: 20 Aug 07

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.	Poor	Quality of theatrical vision was limited and of poor quality. The overall quality of text, direction and performances was not of a high enough standard. The ways in which the piece dealt with issues of social exclusion in relation to disability, sexuality and gender was predictable and pedestrian on both a social and theatrical level. I have never seen the company's work before.
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.	Poor	This was programmed as part of Theatre Workshop's Degenerate 4 programme for the Edinburgh Fringe. I feel that programming here was poor as the quality of the work was not of a high enough standard (either in concept or in execution).
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	Whilst there were no explicit stated aims for the piece itself, it is clear that it aims to discuss issues of social exclusion in relation to disability, sexuality and gender. Whilst it did succeed in addressing these issues, I found it rather clumsy in execution.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Competent / Poor	Rachel Amey, Nathan Young, Robert Softley, Raymond Short. The overall quality of acting was not of a high standard. Despite a charismatic performance from Softley, the performers generally lacked complexity and subtlety on both a comedic and dramatic level.
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.	Competent	Stephen Keyworth. My reaction to the script was mixed. It certainly succeeded in lining up some decent comic lines and the show was not without enjoyment for me. However, the script failed to move beyond simple gags and into the more complex arena of social satire, despite the rich potential of the scenario. In terms of observational humour it

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
			was prosaic and in terms of social comment it did nothing to provoke thought for me.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Poor	Raymond Short Interpretation of the text was simplistic and overall presentation was unimaginative and pedestrian. Even taking into account the confines of the Fringe format, the quality of artistic ideas and the level or directorial skill was poor.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Competent	Some music was used in the piece, though to little theatrical effect.
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.	LX - poor Set – n/a Costume – n/a	The piece had no designer credited and didn't have a set. Even within the confines of a (presumably) tiny or non-existent budget, the quality of lighting (both practically and artistically) was poor.
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Competent / Poor	Even taking into account the limitations of presenting a show on the Fringe, I found the quality of presentation was not of a high standard.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		Full capacity audience of around 50 people. The piece seemed highly appropriate for the audience, who gave it an extremely warm reaction with much laughter and applause.
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.	Competent	There was a simple photocopied programme with credits and biogs. There was no other additional interpretative activity that I was aware of.
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	

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	Poor. The upstairs studio at theatre workshop is not a good quality theatre space and was also unbearably hot for an audience of fifty. Many people in the audience complained about this.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	There was a simple credits/biog programme and no other information that I was made aware of.
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.	Marketing materials for the piece were of very poor quality. Marketing for the Degenerate 4 programme was of better quality, but (when I booked my ticket) the Theatre Workshop website had woefully little information about the Fringe programme.
Ease of booking and payment	Booking over the phone was pretty difficult and the person I dealt with was not able to do the job to a professional standard.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	The location is not on a main transport route and I had to get there by taxi.
External signage and signposting	Adequate.
Internal directional signage	Very poor. Finding the gents was very difficult.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Ramp and lift.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The time of the show (22.10) and the length (1h30) seemed appropriate for a Fringe show.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	The box office staff were not efficient at all, but FOH staff were very friendly.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	As expected, SAC were credited on Theatre Workshop materials and not on Bind Productions.

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.