



## 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:** Traverse Theatre Company

**Venue:** Traverse 2

**Title of Event:** Carthage Must Be Destroyed

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

**Date of Visit:** 01/05/2007

**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.)

**Competent** This was a play of two halves. The first was tightly directed, had a highly imaginative set and the characters' political machinations kept the audience engaged and were obviously very pertinent to contemporary events. The second half almost felt like a different play. The pace and vigour of the writing fell and it seemed to lose direction. The central character's refusal to kill the youth was pivotal to the play, but unbelievable. The piece has the potential to be of good quality, but the second half needed some re-writing and possibly more rehearsal.

Name: \_\_\_Jaine Lumsden\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_08\_ / \_05\_ / \_\_\_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	The themes of the piece were highly pertinent to contemporary life – political machinations and an exploration of how far people will go to hold on to power, including creating a war situation with devastating consequences for the invaded country.  I haven't seen a Traverse own production for some time so don't feel able to comment on the comparison with previous work.
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.		Traverse own production.
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 <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	Competent	The Traverse is a new writing theatre and commissioned this script. There were no stated aims for this production as such in the programme.  The website publicity for the play “Set against the backdrop of the Third Punic War, Alan Wilkins' <i>Carthage Must Be Destroyed</i> is a compelling story of political intrigue, double dealing and the ruthless realities of taking a nation to war.” This is a realistic description of the subject matter, but the piece failed to be consistently compelling because of the weakness of the second half.
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	Sean Campion gave a strong portrayal of the central character Gregor in the first half, but the credibility of his portrayal suffered in the second half because of an unconvincing change of character (see under script.) Paul-James Corrigan was convincing as the youth from Carthage, although he seemed less sure when playing David. Tony Guilfoyle and Damian Lynch gave consistently believable performances. With the exception of Paul-James Corrigan the cast seemed slightly uncertain in the second half, which was partly because of the script but also made me wonder if this needed more rehearsal.

<sup>1</sup> 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.	Competent	<p>By Alan Wilkins who made the most of his background material in the first half, taking the audience through the complex political machinations and the changing relationships between the characters. It had an obvious resonance with many of the political and violent current world situations, treated with subtlety.</p> <p>I was unsure about his use of Gregor’s partiality for young boys as a symbol of decadence which seemed a little obvious and clumsy. Cato did not need to use this as an excuse/reason to send Gregor to Carthage – the constant politicking between the characters could have provided a neater and more likely motivation.</p> <p>The second half was almost like a different play. While Gregor’s reliance on drink and inaction was believable, his meandering speeches did not manage to hold the audiences. It would appear that Wilkins was trying to portray some kind of character change through these, culminating in his refusal to kill the youth on Cato’s orders (thus condemning himself and the youth to die.) This refusal was frankly unbelievable.</p>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Competent	<p>By Lorne Campbell who directed the first half with authority, keeping the pace brisk. The relationships between the characters were drawn out well and their inner motivations were apparent, without being too obvious. The second half was not nearly as tight as the first and seemed to wander, losing pace and engagement. The final scene was touching, but because of the difficulties in believing in Gregor’s actions immediately prior to this, did not have as much impact as it should have. (see under script and performers.)</p> <p>The fight scenes by Carter Ferguson were directed well.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Good	Sound by Philip Pinsky which worked in the context of the production.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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	The set design by Kenny Miller was imaginative (especially the bath set used in the first half.) Its simple lines suited the Traverse 2 space Lighting by Renny Robertson worked well with the set.
All	<p><b>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</b></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>	Competent	Professionally presented.
All	<p><b>Audience</b></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>	Sold out (or nearly.) One person left – she appeared unwell. Good reaction	
All	<p><b>Additional Interpretative activity</b> – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.</p>	Good	(information from website): Writers Workshop; Touch Tour This seems appropriate for the production and the company.
All	<p><b>Outcomes of education activity</b> – 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>		Can't comment as I did not attend the activities.

## 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	Entirely appropriate
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programmes which included the script, usual company biog.s, some information on the Traverse. Posters, 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.	Traverse programme and website – both clearly laid out. Flyers and posters, the design of which was appropriate for the play.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A invited
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easy to find. On several bus routes and within walking distance of Haymarket station.
External signage and signposting	Fine
Internal directional signage	Fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Fine (lift.)
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Seemed appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Friendly and efficient
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Acknowledged

<sup>2</sup> 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.