



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: Dogstar

Venue: Tron

Title of Event: 'e Polish Quine

Type of Event: performance

Date of Visit: 06/06/2007

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 The piece was successful in illuminating today's world regarding issues around immigration but less so regarding the effects of war. There were some strong performances and the use of music worked well. However, the script needed editing down and some of the characters were unconvincing.

Name: Jaine Lumsden Date: 25/06/2007

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 set in the historical context of the period just after WWII, the themes are very relevant today – the aftermath of war and the combatants' difficulties with returning to civilian life, immigration and the effects this has on the indigenous community. Although I have seen the work of the director I have not seen this company before.
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.		Artist led new writing
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	(From director's notes in the programme) "...is a play about the shock of war...Our duty as theatre artists is to respond to the world we live in with wit, humour courage and craft. By examining the brutal events which occurred in mainland Europe over 60 years ago, we are attempting to improve our understanding of that time and of the world we live in today." The piece was successful in illuminating today's world regarding issues around immigration but less so regarding the effects of war.
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	The quality of acting was mixed. On occasion all of the cast seemed to be declaiming loudly to the audience, which didn't sit well with the style of script. Douglas Russell played both of his roles convincingly and Hamish Wilson's father was portrayed with a quiet dignity entirely suitable to the part. Anne Kidd suffered from a stereotypical part that meant she was not entirely believable (see under script.) The central characters' (David - Fraser C Sivewright and Anna - Magdalena Kaleta) mutual attraction was delivered well, but David's anguish in dealing with his direct experience of the death camps failed to convince. I found Sarah Haworth's sometimes peculiar facial contortions distracting and it was unclear what they were meant to convey. (It is not possible to tell if this was her or the director's idea.)

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 see under direction
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Competent	<p>By Henry Adam. The director's programme notes state that the characters are at once archetypal and individual. In some cases this was definitely the former – specifically regarding the mother who was verging on caricature. The use of humour around her character was misplaced, as it only served to emphasise her character's two-dimensionality. The revelation of her first son's death did little to round the character out.</p> <p>The effect of Polish immigration into the area and the resulting racism that the playwright seemed to be saying is buried within all of us was explored well and with insight that resonates with contemporary society. The effect of the death camps on David was curiously unmoving, given the subject matter.</p> <p>The ending of the play was a strength as it delivered no easy or pat answers.</p> <p>The play would have benefited from some editing down, as it was unnecessarily long to get its points across.</p>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Competent	By Matthew Zajac, who used the live music well, introducing variety. The use of the set was imaginative at times. The directorial style was a slightly strange mixture of natural and non-naturalistic. The occasional declamatory style of some of the actors sat oddly with the naturalism of the dialogue. The humour was predictable and the pace dragged at times – although this is also because of the script itself. (see also under performers)
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Good	Mostly live singing by the cast, some pre-recorded. Sound design Andy Thorburn, music consultant Johnny Hardie. This was of good quality and there was an interesting and appropriate mixture of Scottish and Polish music.
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	Set design by Dave Smith, lighting design by Brain Gorman. The set had inset gauzes which were sometimes used to illuminate the silhouettes of representative objects (eg horse harness), or cut outs to represent landscapes, or real humans. This was imaginative and allowed a relatively simple set to convey lots of different settings. The way in which the floor cloth had been painted rather spoilt the set's effectiveness as it was garish and a little crude.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			Costume design by Angelina Gerrard seemed realistic for the time apart from one very contemporary hair scrunchie.
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>	Competent	Professionally presented
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>		Seemed appropriate. c. 70 people. Mixed ages, with quite a lot of older people. Good reaction.
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	Not aware of anything
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	Suitable
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Programmes, which had director's notes.
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.	This is touring so is included in the venues' own brochures, websites and company's own website. Posters and listings.
Ease of booking and payment	Fine, by phone.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Fine
External signage and signposting	Fine
Internal directional signage	Fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Fine
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	An appropriate start time but the piece seemed to drag.
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 ²	Acknowledged

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.