

## 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: The Tron Theatre**

**Venue:** The Tron

**Title of Event:** **The Drawer Boy by Michael Healey**

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

**Date of Visit:** 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008

**Overall Rating: Excellent** - a beautifully observed atmospheric story told with humour, excellently paced it fully engages the audience as it develops and perfectly fits the naturalistic set.

*(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.)*

Name: Sandy Maxwell Date: 15/05/2008

Specialist Advisor

*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.	excellent	A poignant bittersweet story with plenty of light-hearted observational humour. It was superbly delivered and well suited to the intimacy of the Tron.
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.	good	It follows on naturally from the previous Canadian playwrights tradition at the Tron with the same clever humour of the Tremblay plays such as the Guid Sisters.
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	excellent	Andy Arnold in the programme declares as part of his mission "...to attempt to present great pieces of contemporary theatre and new plays which will appeal to Glasgow and West of Scotland audiences." The Drawer Boy has been an international success since its 1999 Canadian premier and this Scottish premiere fully succeeds in all these missionary aims. In his YouTube video interview on the Tron website he refers to "A good night out" and "theatre taking you on a journey" both of which successfully fulfilled by the production.
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	Brian Pettifer & Benny Young are outstanding as the two farmers whose isolated lifestyle is designed to cope with a cataclysmic event in the past are upset by an actor looking for experience while writing about farm life. Brian Fergusson's as the naïve townie actor is slightly less convincing as a character.
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.	good	The humour is largely accessible and gentle but doesn't obstruct a solid storyline being developed along with several twists and turns. It is easy to see why the production has been a success across North America.

<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.

<b>Artform</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Comments and key reasons for rating</b>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	excellent	Andy Arnold played out the humour well in the first act and subtly brought out the twists and turns in the second act as the depths of the story were revealed. Casting was excellent, the cast not only looked the parts they fitted the characters well.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	good	Phil Farr's soundscape set the scene of the Canadian farmland well
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	Hazel Blue's naturalistic set of a cutaway farm kitchen, porch and yard worked exceedingly well and the receding line of power lines going into the cyc placed the set well in the expanse of the Canadian prairie. Sergey Jakovskys lighting was subtle with a dark element suggesting depth to the setting.
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  Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.	good	To the high technical standard that you would expect at the Tron
All	Audience  Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction  Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors' books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit  Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc		Around 75% full on a Wednesday night despite the counter attractions of a certain football game on in Manchester. Very enthusiastic applause at the end and even at the interval with chuckling rather than belly laughs in keeping with clever nature of the humour. Nothing but good comments from audience following the show.
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.		Post show discussion programmed for one night with director & cast, other activity not publicised if available.
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	

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating

## 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	Excellent intimate space but technical capable to display a full set
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Reviews & previews clearly displayed, programme is very informative & free.
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.	Heavy poster selling through Glasgow including large posters on advertising stands. Brochure & leaflets readily available. Tron website is very clearly laid out with good linkage to some other information about the play eg View from the Stalls website, good use of video trailers and writer/director interviews by use of You Tube. Favourable quotes from reviews promptly added to site but full reviews could have been linked to.
Ease of booking and payment	Telephone booking (no booking fee) fast and efficient, simple online booking system also available. Box office staff friendly on pickup.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easy to find and good public transport available, could possibly do with cycle racks for audience rather than existing railings.
External signage and signposting	good
Internal directional signage	good
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	good
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	8pm for play running at just under two hours including interval - appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	All excellent
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Present on posters, programme & around building.

<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

### 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.