



### 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.

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>TRON Theatre Co</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Tron Theatre</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Suddenly Last Summer</b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>Theatre</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

**This was a crystal clear production of Tennessee William's slice of Southern Gothic. Its highly symbolic study of the repercussions of suppressed sexuality was complimented by 'Sebastian's' stylized garden setting, slowly, oppressively, turning jungle red, as the horrific truth is revealed. The performances were uniformly strong and the final monologue was as unsettling as it was compelling.**

Name: **Stewart Ennis** Date: **11<sup>th</sup> November 2008** **Specialist Advisor**

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	This crystal clear production is of Tennessee William's slice of Southern Gothic is further evidence both of Andy Arnold's continuing love of modern, minor classic, well-made plays, and his interest in using all available space, both evident during his long tenure at The Arches. Therefore, when considering the quality of imagination and ideas at work here, it is worth looking, not only at the well realised main stage work, but at the compilation or arrangement of all the pieces together.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.	Excellent	This piece is part of the Glasgay Festival which this year focuses on the work of Tennessee Williams. The inclusion of a some of Williams' shorter lesser known pieces ( <i>Like The Rain</i> and <i>A Perfect Analysis Given by a Parrot</i> ) utilizing both in the smaller Changing House and the main theatre to create a complete evening of entertainment, is an indication (as mentioned above) of Andy Arnold's intentions to make full use of all available Tron spaces as he did so successfully at the Arches.
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	In the programme Andy Arnold states his interest in Tennessee Williams earlier works. <i>Suddenly last Summer</i> , is a project which he has brought over from his time at The Arches. It is brilliant piece of stage writing which remains, as Arnold says in his programme notes; "stunningly contemporary to a 21 <sup>st</sup> century audience." The productions visual and textual garden/jungle references were deep, dark, strong and clear without becoming unnecessarily histrionic The resulting highly symbolic study of the repercussions of suppressed sexuality and the inability of a mother to deal with truth about her son was tragic, occasionally grotesque, and always compelling.
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	The performances were universally strong and focused, with accents consistent throughout. Claire Yuille final dramatic monologue was really quite gripping but it was the support of her fellow cast members which helped to sustain its high level of intensity.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	N/A	

<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	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Excellent	Tennessee William’s original script was used throughout. It is still a sparkling piece of writing and in no way feels dated.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Casting seemed perfectly appropriate throughout. Andy Arnold’s direction had a real crispness and lucidity to it, his great fondness for Williams’ work shining through. If it is going to reach its chilling climax effectively, this piece needs to engage its audience with the power of solid, persuasive storytelling, and this it does to enormous effect and without unnecessary melodrama.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	Steven Bain’s sound design successfully added to and supported the tension of the piece without ever being overwhelming.
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	Jessica Brettle set and Malcolm Rogan’s lighting were quite straightforward and worked well together. The creation of the lush, hot and oppressively humid garden of Sebastian with lights slowly fading to deep jungle red perfectly complimented the productions major themes and helped maintain the necessary tension.
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement  Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Excellent	All technical cues appeared smooth, efficient and unobtrusive.
All	Audience  Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		The audience appeared enthusiastic throughout, audibly during the amusing shorter opening piece and showing great appreciation at the end.
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.	N/A	
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	The venue was ideal for this in house Tron production
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Posters, programmes, displays were clearly positioned and informative.
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.	Brochure programme were full of useful information as was the Tron website which was easy to negotiate.
Ease of booking and payment	No problems. Very helpful box office who called me back to sort out a possible booking error.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	On many train/bus/underground routes.
External signage and signposting	Easy to find.
Internal directional signage	Easy to find.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Adequate.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Quite appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent box office and friendly bar and café staff.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	SAC acknowledge where appropriate.

<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.

**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.