



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: The Tron

Venue: The Tron

Title of Event: Six Acts of Love

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

Date of Visit: 11th October 2008

Overall Rating: Good

(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.)

Six acts of Love oozed wit and warmth and was woven full of promising narrative threads, themes and ideas.

However, after the opening scene, the narrative seemed to change direction, becoming increasingly plot driven before ending in a way that, I found, perhaps too neatly tied up the threads.

Name: Rebecca Robinson Date: 12 / 10 / 08

Specialist Advisor x

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.	Good	<i>Six Acts of Love</i> was an entertaining production filled with wit and warmth. The first scene – with its themes of ageing, memory, love and loss – was, I found, immediately engaging and promised much. However, the script then seemed to change direction and became increasingly plot driven before ending in a way that, I found, perhaps too neatly tied up the narrative threads. Nevertheless, I found the excellent performances and upbeat pace helped make this an entertaining piece of theatre.
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	This production was the world premiere of Edinburgh-born playwright's Ioanna Anderson's <i>Six Acts of Love</i> and was directed by the Tron's Artistic Director Andy Arnold. The production forms part of a lively winter season for the Tron, which – though including some touring productions – has its emphasis on in-house work by the Tron Theatre Company.
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	Good	Andy Arnold stated that, since becoming Artistic Director of the Tron in April 2008, he has worked to re-establish the Tron as a producer of work, focusing, in particular, on new work and contemporary classics. As a premiere produced by the Tron, <i>Six Acts of Love</i> met this aim.
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	The strong cast of 5 worked well together to create a dynamic and well-paced production, with the pivotal role of <i>Katherine</i> played with compassion by Barbara Wilshere. Una McLean made a particularly captivating, and tragic, transformation from the sparkling and still-beautiful <i>Dorothy</i> to her character's decline into senility.
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	Script: Ioanna Anderson As mentioned above, <i>Six acts of Love</i> seemed to ooze wit and warmth and was woven full of promising narrative threads, themes and ideas. However, I did feel that this fullness meant that some of themes and ideas were left unexplored in favour of plot. I thought that the mainly shadowy character of <i>Delilah</i> was not fully developed and acted more as a foil to other character's narratives. Nevertheless, I thought that the script had great flow, pace and energy.

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
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	Direction: Andy Arnold. I thought Andy Arnold's direction drew out the humour of the piece, creating a well-paced and engaging production with strong performances from the well-cast cast. The staging was conventional - in keeping with the conventional form of the script. However, as mentioned above, after the opening scene, my engagement with the production waned somewhat as, I felt, the play became increasingly plot driven.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	Sound – Steve Bain The pre-recorded music was unobtrusive and well integrated into the production - providing an occasional upbeat energy.
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.	Good	Designer –Francis Gallop Mark Hughes – Lighting Designer Wardrobe Supervisor – Aisling Ni Ghloinn The playing area was enclosed within a low, crumbling brick wall and strewn with piles of domestic detritus. Though clearly a domestic scene – for e.g. a large table and chairs dominated the playing space – the specific location was only suggested, allowing a more adaptable use of the stage. The set seemed to represent the sense of the burden of carrying the emotional and physical baggage of the past, although the weightiness of this theme was, I felt, in fact more lightly touched on in other aspects of the production. The orange hues of the lighting and set added visual warmth to this emotionally warm production. Costumes seemed appropriate for the characters.
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>	Good	The production was presented professionally from a technical point of view.
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,</p>		The auditorium was approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ full with the majority of the audience appearing to be in the over-40 age-range. There was laughter throughout the performance and warm applause at the end.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	enthusiasm, number involved, etc		
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	In terms of both form and content this production seemed to be a suitable event to mount at the Tron.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	There were several large posters on display in the foyer areas, as well as flyers, reviews and production shots. There was a free, glossy colour programme, which contained a cast list and information about forthcoming productions. A complete script of the play was also on sale, which also contained cast and company biogs and an author's and director's 'note'. The publicity image captured, I thought, the essence of the production.
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.	The production was advertised in the local and national press and it received a number of reviews. The production was also advertised on the Tron's website. All information was clear and easy to understand.
Ease of booking and payment	No problems – I booked the ticket by phone and picked it up from the box office.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	The Tron is in Glasgow's city centre and is easy to access by bus, underground, train or car.
External signage and signposting	The Tron is well signposted externally.
Internal directional signage	Internal signage is fairly clear – although the entrance to the Changing House is not clearly marked and audience members needed to be directed by ushers to the appropriate performance space.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Seemed to be ok.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The event began at 7.30pm and finished at approximately 10 pm with one interval. This seemed to be an appropriate length.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Front of House and Box Office staff were all friendly and efficient.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	The SAC were acknowledged on all publicity material that I was aware of.

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

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.

We are very happy with this evaluation but want to add a note about the educational activity associated with the production. This is not something that the assessor would have been aware of but we would like to highlight it as it takes place in association with Tron Theatre Company productions.

For 6 Acts of Love, our Education Outreach Manager, Lisa Keenan worked with the Aberlour Centre in Glasgow. It's a home where recovering addicts and their children can be referred. The women in this project had never been to the theatre before. We ran a pre show workshop using the performance trailer, script excerpts and the model box to introduce the characters and themes. The women then came to the matinee performance. Feedback from the group was positive. They had been apprehensive about attending the theatre and understanding the piece.

This work has now started a relationship between the Tron and the group. Since attending the performance women on the group have participated in animation workshops and our monthly Tall Tales sessions. Education and Outreach will now work closely with this group to develop the relationship further through visits with the women and their children to Hannah and Harvey, Little Rudi and Mother Bruce.

