



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company:	Random Accomplice
Venue:	Tron Theatre
Title of Event:	Promises Promises
Type of Event:	<i>Performance</i>
Date of Visit:	Friday 5th February 2010
Overall Rating:	Excellent

Excellent direction and a well structured and observed new script are well delivered by this relatively new theatre company in association with the Tron. The one woman monologue successfully achieves the description by the company as "a gripping new thriller"

Name: Sandy Maxwell Date: 07/02/10
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 on 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 future 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:

- Very poor**- standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- Poor** - not well conceived and executed
- Satisfactory**
- Good** - well conceived and executed
- Very Good** – well conceived and executed to a very good standard
- Excellent** – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	very good	An impressive production from a relatively new Scottish company shows great maturity in delivering an excellent and thought provoking script in a highly theatrical style
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	very good	A good example of the Tron's support for companies in a co-production in producing interesting new work and a good wide touring programme through Scotland with one London date that should reinforce the good relations with venues that the company has already been building up.
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate e.g. from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	very good	A successful departure from some of the companies previous camp comedies to produce “a gripping new thriller” The script was commissioned from the writer by the company.
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	very good	A 90 minute monologue by Joanna Tope. She has grasped the character well and handles the changes in pace and humour/darkness in the script. The night I saw it I felt that there was an occasional slight hesitancy there that indicates her performance is not as brilliant as it may become.
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the work original? How was the space used? How many dancers were there and how were they used? How long was the piece? 	not applicable	

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	<p>Script</p> <p>Please comment on this for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 	excellent	<p>Douglas Maxwell's script explores a problem of society when political correctness in the realisation of racial equality conflicts with the interests of the individual concerned. The script successfully captures the character, speech and nuances of a Scottish matron who has dedicated her life to teaching primary school children. Flaws in her work and private career are slowly revealed to explain how she responds to a situation set up in a school where she is only filling in as a relief teacher. When she sees the system's political correctness going against the interests of a Somali girl in her class she takes the opportunity to fight back, to fulfil a promise she made to the girl, and therefore atone for her own previous limitations. It would have made a perfectly structured short story by the likes of Roald Dahl or Ian McEwan but Maxwell has further given it a perfect theatrical approach using humour, suspense and an unexpected denouement.</p>
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	excellent	<p>Johnny McKnight very successfully brings out the theatricality of the story by using a range of mechanisms without overindulging in any of them. Interest and attention are held throughout the 90 minutes of the monologue by subtle changes of pace and use of humour to engage the audience with the character of the teacher and her predicament. Joanna Trope is excellently cast as a very believable Scottish teacher with a chequered career brought back as a supply replacement in a London primary school. The whole performance is well presented by the company.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	very good	<p>Karen MacIver has composed a first rate soundscape of strings both plucked and played to reinforce the tone of the play at its various stages. Underlying it is noticeable but never overpowering.</p>
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (e.g. lighting and sound cues, etc). 	good	<p>The lighting by Dave Shea and design by Lisa Sangster are a good mixture of a naturalistic and comforting primary classroom which can transform to open the setting and story out to a wider context in a non realistic manner. The final revelation that the story is being related from behind prison bars doesn't quite come off. Tim Reid's video projections very successfully but subtly assist with bringing to life the character of the little girl who is not present on stage. Technical execution was generally very good but slightly marred by occasional random flashings of video onto the set and views of the set change being carried out behind the movable back wall panels.</p>
All	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ 	very good	<p>The company in its marketing pack recommend the play for 14+ but the Tron or printed material hadn't made any point of this. The audience (almost a full house) on the performance I saw were all adults of mixed ages and what might be described as a regular Tron audience who were very responsive to the production. I was completely engaged through the performance and appreciated the way that a complex situation was explored but left with the</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>engaged/inspired?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event e.g. workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led e.g. one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project? <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		<p>depressing thought that no solutions are simple.</p> <p>The company produce a basic marketing pack on their website but no visible education material</p> <p>No described BSL or Captioned performances are listed in the Tron brochure for Promises Promises or on the Company website for the remainder of the tour.</p>

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								
Location and suitability of the venue for the event <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is it easy to find? 2. Is it on a main transport route? 3. Are the spaces clean? 4. What were the sight lines like? 5. How big was it? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes 3. Yes 4. Good 5. 0.01701 Hectares 								
Information/ interpretive material at venue– <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? • Is there information on the venue's website? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free programmes leaflets and Tron season brochure available as well as posters and badges for the production. • Good info on Tron & Random Accomplice website as well as use of You-tube & Twitter to promote the play 								
Publicity/ pre-publicity – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? • What publicity materials are produced? • Is it easy to understand? • Where can you get the information? • Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailing from Tron and leaflets at previous visit to venue, posters around Glasgow, e news from Tron and editorial coverage in Herald, Scotsman & List amongst others • See above • Yes • Tron Website, S1 website, box office, List • Yes 								
Ease of booking and payment	simple & easy internet booking								
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? • Was the length appropriate? 	7.30pm start fine and 90 minutes passed quickly but gave a satisfying feeling of having seen a complete production								
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the entrance clearly marked? • Is there clear internal directional signage? • Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Yes • Some 								
Access and provision for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/ No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL</td> <td>no</td> <td>Audio</td> <td>no</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL	no	Audio	no
	Yes/ No		Yes/ No						
BSL	no	Audio	no						

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.

Criteria	Comment			
Please add in any additional comments below the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	interpretation		description of performances	
	Captioning	no	Lift/ramp	yes
	Accessible toilets	yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	no
Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Box office & FOH staff very friendly No obviously disabled customers when I was there so can not comment 			

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.