



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: Communicado and The Tron Theatre

Venue: The Tron

Title of Event: The Government Inspector

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: Tuesday 16th February 2010

Overall Rating: EXCELLENT

(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.)

Communicado's *The Government Inspector* was a delight to watch from start to finish. In the inimitable style of the company, this political satire was well directed with excellent performances from an extremely strong cast of actors/musicians. Although there are serious issues addressed in the play, this version by Adrian Mitchell of the original Gogol play resonated with the current antics of today's politicians and was full of wit and humour throughout. The music (MD: Alasdair Macrae) fully complemented the production and showed off the talents of both actor/musician Alasdair Macrae along with other cast members.

Name: Wendy Niblock

Date: 8th April 2010

Scottish Arts Council Officer

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 	EXCELLENT	<p>I have followed Communicado's work for many years and have always found Gerry Mulgrew's vision and imagination very high. It surprises me when people think of physical theatre as relatively new as Mulgrew, in my opinion, was a pioneer of this type of work (e.g. <i>The Legend of St Julien</i>).</p> <p>His production of <i>The Government Inspector</i> was Communicado on top form – rich storytelling with wonderful and authentic music to complement the piece.</p>
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. 	EXCELLENT	<p>Communicado's website states that it <i>draws on the rich traditions of world theatre to create powerful ensemble drama. The dynamic interplay of language, movement and music is the company's hallmark.... For 21 years, Communicado has created theatre of the highest caliber, playing its eclectic repertoire to a wide and loyal public. The company is dedicated to exploring the art of theatre in all its aspects, to challenging its artists to take risks, and to giving its audience a good time.</i></p> <p>My view is <i>The Government Inspector</i> fulfilled all of these aims very well.</p>
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 eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	VERY GOOD	<p>In my view, the performance fulfilled the aims of the company. The piece had a clear narrative. As already mentioned a strength of the company is, in my view, its ability for strong storytelling.</p> <p>The publicity material stated <i>a swinging, fast paced, very black comedy ... with live music played by the company</i>. The company did not disappoint on any level. Personally, I did not realise the length of the piece and could not believe that it was nearly three hours long.</p> <p>The production could not have been staged at a better time, given the state of current political antics over politicians' expenses.</p> <p>Given that the original play was written in 1835, it is disappointing to think that these issues still arise in the current political climate.</p>

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
All	Performers/tutors <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? 	EXCELLENT	<p>The cast was well chosen for their acting, music and comic skills. I thought the performers were all strong, with many of them showing their musical talents too (Cliff Burnett, Kirstin McLean and Tim Licata). The cast looked as if they were having a ball on stage.</p> <p>Special praise must be given to John Bett who stepped into the lead role at short notice. I attended the invite night and he was word perfect on the night.</p> <p>The cast had their audience engaged throughout. Although the piece was nearly three hours long, my view was that the audience were completely entranced and captivated throughout the performance.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <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? 	GOOD	<p>Malcolm Shields who played The Judge was credited as movement director. He has a long association with Communicado having worked on many of their earlier productions. His movement direction worked well and blended naturally with the action on stage.</p>
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 	EXCELLENT	<p>This version, adapted by Adrian Mitchell over twenty five years ago, was wonderful. It was full of satire and humour and had me laughing throughout the piece. It was coherent and pitched at the right level to the audience. In my view, the piece would have appealed to a wide range of ages.</p>
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	EXCELLENT	<p>Gerry Mulgrew's direction was confident and well paced. Given that the production was nearly three hours long, it raced by as it was full of humour. A joy to watch from start to finish.</p> <p>Personally, I thought it was Mulgrew on top form with both the choice of play and his choice of cast members. The whole cast was strong – both in terms of their acting and musical skills. There were some lovely comic moments, which were well delivered.</p> <p>I thought the production was presented to a very high standard.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	EXCELLENT	<p>Musical direction by Alasdair Macrae (Osip and the Postmaster) was strong and highly authentic for the period in which the production was set. Live music was played by Alasdair himself, along with some of the cast members. The music highly complemented the production.</p> <p>It was great to hear Lewis Anderson's musical talent (a pupil at Douglas Academy's music school).</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 	VERY GOOD	<p>Design by Jessica Brettle worked very well. I thought her set was very inventive and transformed into many different settings. The revolving doors highly complemented the comic aspects of the piece.</p> <p>Lighting by Sergey Jakovsky was highly appropriate for the piece and again, complemented the aesthetics of the production.</p>
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • 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 eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg 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 	EXCELLENT	<p>I thought the production was pitched to a wide-ranging audience. My opinion is that it would be enjoyed by people of all ages.</p> <p>I was there on the invite night so it was a full house the night I saw it.</p> <p>The audience (and myself) were engaged throughout. Personally I thought it was a joy to watch from start to finish. There was much and well-deserved appreciation at the end of the performance.</p> <p>The Tron offered both a captioned and an audio described performance during its run. Unfortunately, at the time of writing my assessment, I have mislaid my leaflet which would have informed me which other touring venues offered accessible performances.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>recruited?</p> <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>		

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
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? Are the spaces clean? What were the sight lines like? How big was it? 	<p>The Tron Theatre is centrally based and is on several main bus routes. It is within easy walking distance of all train stations (Central, Argyle Street and Queen St) and underground stations (Buchanan St and St Enoch Square).</p> <p>The venue was ideal for this performance with a capacity of around 200. On the whole, the sightlines are good.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>The theatre had a good front of house display of posters, fliers and production photographs. The Tron's website is very informative with options to book online.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <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 Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>There was a fair amount of preview coverage for the show in various publications. I read pieces in The List, The Herald and the Sunday Herald.</p> <p>All publicity materials contained SAC accreditation.</p> <p>SAC logo is also on the homepages of Comunicado and the Tron's websites.</p> <p>I was also aware of the performance being part of general listings.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>N/A – received an invitation.</p>
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? 	<p>The performance started at 7.30pm and lasted for just under three hours. This was highly appropriate for this production, which included an interval.</p>

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																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the length appropriate? 	<p>I have to admit, the show went by very quickly and I was taken by surprise when I realised the length of the piece at the end of the performance.</p>																
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? 	<p>Signage is clear within the venue. I am not aware of any braille signage in the venue but there is an audio loop. <i>The Government Inspector</i> was both audio described and captioned at the venue.</p>																
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 <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 499 1257 1021"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>NO</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>YES</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>YES</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td>NOT SURE</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	NO	Audio description of performances	YES	Captioning	YES	Lift/ramp	YES	Accessible toilets	YES	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	NOT SURE
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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? 	<p>The Tron's box office and front of house staff are always efficient and friendly.</p>																

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.