



## 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:** Oran Mor

**Venue:** Macrobert

**Title of Event:** Oran Mor(E)

**Type of Event:** tour of two Oran Mor short plays, Tir nan Og and A Walk in the Park both written by Dave Anderson

**Date of Visit:** 27 September 2007

**Overall Rating:** Excellent

These were two deceptively simply mounted and creatively directed pieces with a cast of multi skilled Scottish professionals, written– and performed - by the prolific Dave Anderson. There were no major happenings, coups de theatre or special effects, just great words, good themes and excellent music, with the Dave Anderson mix of humour, politics, sadness and much else all going towards a thoroughly good night at the theatre. Can't remember when I've enjoyed an evening of theatre more, and it was clear the audience were of like mind.

Name: SYLVIA DOW

Date: 30 October 2007

Specialist Advisor

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.	excellent	The 2 plays in this double bill were simply produced with 'junk' sets and simple multi-use props but they were so well acted and directed, and put together with such flair that the end result was engaging and ultimately satisfying. There was imagination and vision aplenty in the words, the music, the acting and direction. Both were by Dave Anderson and rehearsed the themes and humour of much of his work but to good and often telling effect.
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.	excellent	Part of the Oran Mor stable of new plays, one of these, a musical update of the story of Tir Nan Og won the Dresscircle.com award. It was good to have the opportunity to see some of Oran Mor's Play, Pie and a Pint series touring post Festival under the heading Oran MorE
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	Not sure about what the 'stated aims' might be apart from the aim of any theatrical event – to stimulate, inform and entertain. These both plays did in full measure. The artistic themes were well communicated through the quality of writing and acting. In fact the 2 plays had some common themes – the outsider, loneliness, a hint of tragedy along with a surreal quality and a great deal of humour.
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	Performance skills were as high as one might expect from a professional company of actors working in contemporary Scots and using the language with verve as well as comfort. All the performers were multi skilled and all were well known faces from the current cadre of Scottish actors – all worked to a high standard of professionalism. In terms of communication I thought the cast were particularly adept in Tir nan Og where the plethora of songs required spot-on diction. They delivered the lyrics clearly and well. The performances had a huge degree of commitment – the female actors ( Pauline Knowles and Jennifer Rhodes) were particularly impressive.
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.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	excellent	<p>A Walk in the Park is the story of a melancholic old man with an unspecified loss in his life connected with his daughter, and the animals and objects he sees on a walk in the park. This could have been unbearably whimsical but it was written with a lovely mix of humour and sadness and with a real understanding of old age and loss so the anthropomorphism didn't come over as 'cute' – just natural and funny. I really enjoyed the pithy and pointed writing in this.</p> <p>Tir nan Og is the story of a Scottish exile on a fantastical journey round the world on a quest for eternal youth. The journey is told in narrative, song and music and is written in an almost surreal style in rich contemporary Scots and a tremendously driving narrative thrust. The lyrics were poetic, punchy and fun and the sweep of this picaresque journey, and the lessons learned from it well conveyed in the writing.</p>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	excellent	Direction was very good, very tight in both well rehearsed productions both of which demanded quite a lot of 'business' using a variety of simple props and sets. It was good to see theatre which was not designer led, not director -led in the sense that the direction was imperceptible (this is meant as a compliment)The casting could not have been better and the director(s) got great performances from everyone on stage.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	excellent	Tir nan Og is a musical piece, and the music was very engaging and very well played - I came out of theatre humming the tunes.
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	The design was deceptively simple but actually very cleverly employed – boxes, 'junk' props and in Tir nan Og a simple screen. Absolutely perfect for touring and also brought theatre back to the important basics.
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>		The technical standards were high as one might expect in a professional venue ( macrobert) Everything went well without apparent flaw.
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'</p>		<p>good</p> <p>The audience size in the macrobert was disappointing – around 25% of capacity. But they thoroughly enjoyed the evening, that was clear, and also the chance to have a pie and a pint at the interval. There was a good buzz.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit</p> <p>Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc</p>		
All	<p><b>Additional Interpretative activity</b> – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.</p>	N/a	
All	<p><b>Outcomes of education activity</b> – 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)?</p>	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?*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Suitability of the venue for the event	A perfect size for the event – only one flaw which was the interval pies and pints, an important part of the experience as the bar really couldn't cope with the queues ( although it was a modest number of audience) and this lengthened the interval time
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Posters, flyers no programmes available
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.	Macrobert website was informative as was the Oran mor website – both clear and easy to negotiate.
Ease of booking and payment	Friendly helpful staff – no problem
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Well signposted from major routes.
External signage and signposting	All excellent and well designed
Internal directional signage	As above
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Built to accommodate all disabilities including hearing and sight loss.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	It was the right length (each play about 50 minutes in length) – a bit of an extended interval (see above) but no-one seemed unhappy.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	A+ in the macrobert as always– ever helpful, friendly and efficient staff both FOH and box office
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	Nothing on flyer – no programme available

<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.