

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL

Assessment Report

Organisation/venue: 7:84 at the Traverse
Title of event: Factory Girls by Frank McGuiness
Type of event: Performance
Date of visit: 29/10/2002

1. Artistic assessment

Please evaluate the **artistic quality** of the event - its vision and imagination; ability to communicate; and quality of production

I would question why 7:84 chose to produce this play. Poor industrial relations still exist and while it is no longer as fashionable a topic for political debate as it once was, the situation is still relevant, especially when one considers it in a global context. However, this play didn't feel relevant. The women's stories without this political context lacked meaning, as this is the key that holds the play together.

1.2 You are also asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the event with specific reference to the following:

Script (particularly in relation to new work, or second productions)

The script was extremely fragmented, made up of lots of very short scenes. The dialogue is very realistic, but could feel a bit relentless at times, as if the playwright felt he had to ensure the characters were being "amusing" at all times, unless they were being "meaningful."

Direction

By Guy Hollands. He coped well with the structure of the piece, which meant that the storyline flowed well. He could possibly have drawn the male characters out more (see below) and, conversely, reined some of the female characters in.

Standard of Performers

A refreshing change to see so many women of all ages on stage. Generally all the women were of reasonable standard, working well together. The actors were far less convincing. Admittedly the male roles were smaller with less potential for actors, but all the male parts came across as slightly two-dimensional with little characterisation.

A special mention must be made of Kay Gallie, who completely stole the show. She was completely convincing and resisted the temptation to overact, which some of the others on stage seemed to be doing occasionally.

Design

A fairly literal set, which worked within the context of the piece. The lighting design worked well.

Technical Standards Fine

Overall Production

Accessible theatre that required little thought on the part of the audience. On the whole a reasonable but uninspired production.

Appropriateness of production for the audience Seemed appropriate.

Approximate size of audience and reaction to the programme of work

Sold out in Traverse 1. Audience a mix of what looked like 7:84 stalwarts, but it was also very pleasing to see young people there in some numbers. A good reaction. There was lots of laughter at the swearwords, which I found slightly depressing. I would have hoped that audiences have sufficient maturity by now than to give this nervous tittering every time they hear a swear word.

2. Management of event

2.1 Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and by the venue. Please answer, where relevant, with reference to the checklist below adding any other comments/observations you may have.

2.2 Suitability of the venue for the event:

Fine

2.3 Information/interpretative material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc.)

range, quantity and clarity

Programmes – reasonably informative.

2.4 Publicity/pre publicity for the event (leaflets, posters, etc.):

range, content and when and where available.

2.5 Accessibility of the venue:

Ease of payment Fine

Location Fine

Direction ?

Access for disabled people Fine

Customer service:

Quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)
Friendly and efficient.

3. Background to your visit

3.1 Have you seen the work of this artist/company before? Yes

3.2 Is this your first visit to this venue? No

Jaine Lumsden