



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: 7:84 at The Arches

Title of Event: Private Agenda

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 21<sup>st</sup> September 2004

**Overall Rating** (Please rate the production 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.)

Good. The performance element was strongly presented. Part two was an open debate with the audience.

Name: Sally Hobson

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

*Please tick the relevant title*

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named below. 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 may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will 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 Council to report on the overall performance of its Core 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, taking account of the following:

1.	Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
1.1	Vision and imagination	Good	There was strong evidence of a clear and cogent vision for the piece; it theatrically and dramatically held together well. The director, Mele had interviewed people regarding PPI and PFI funding, and collected a broad selection of similar views and experiences. This was presented in didactic direct address format. The effect overall was to be informative, direct and at times moving.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	<p>It was clear what the piece was saying. There was a strong agenda from the company about the “agenda” in PPI and PFI funding. The play was directed towards a very particular view, and could be at times hectoring. However the human and well judged theatrical elements of the story were endearing and truthful which allowed the first part of the evening to work well and therefore retain its meaning within a theatrical content. The second half is an open debate. The danger here with the chosen structure for the evening is that the company forgets it is a theatre company, and pursues its own political hegemony at the cost of its artistic integrity, and its funding parameters.</p> <p>This happens after the interval. A strong case of “I’ll make the bullets, you fire the gun” was set up for the audience. They walked straight into it given the strength of their feelings about the subject matter and their own agendas. It was a strong, well-thought through piece of theatre, but was it preaching to the converted? Will the performance reach those who would benefit from its discourse, or will it remained locked in a bubble of like-mindedness? This is a genuine question.</p>

## 2. Strengths and Weaknesses

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the event with reference to the following:

2.	Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
2.1	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions	Good	Pulled together from interviews, the stories interleaved and hung together well. The pace was well handled as was the transitions between each of the different characters’ views and stories.
2.2	Direction	Good	Clear with plenty of nicely judged moments.

2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Excellent	Very strong performances uniformly from the company
2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>		Not applicable
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography		Not applicable
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	Clear and supported the vision of the piece. High production values
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	Good. Video worked well, and lighting design was professional.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	The audience was very enthusiastic. It transpired during the debate that a lot the audience were health professionals, teachers or contributors to the piece.

### 3. 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.*

3.	Criteria	Comments
3.1	Suitability of the venue for the event	Good

<sup>1</sup> In particular, please comment on the quality and appropriateness of any original music composed for the production. Please indicate whether the music was performed live or recorded, in whole or in parts, and what effect this has on the quality of the production.

<sup>2</sup> Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule

3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	Good
3.3	Publicity/ pre- publicity <sup>4</sup>	Good
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Good
3.5	External signage and signposting	Good
3.6	Internal directional signage	Good
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Good
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Good
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	Present on all printed and website material

<sup>3</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

<sup>4</sup> Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised, commenting on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

<sup>5</sup> The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:

"The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc."

Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.