



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: 7:84/Paisley Arts Centre

Title of Event: Private Agenda

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, work-in-progress, open rehearsal etc.)

Performance

Date of Visit: 2/9/04

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 voices of users of, workers within and campaigners against PFI initiatives in Scotland were clearly presented in this timely 7:84 production. Whilst I applaud the sentiment of letting these voices be heard in an uncluttered way and the process of their collection. I felt that the production's decision to not restage any of the events we heard about and to deliver most as a series of monologues, meant that the evening whilst interesting was a little dry and did not engage as it might. It would also have been illuminating to hear from the power brokers involved if only as a source of potential humour.

Name: Garry Robson

Date: 15 / 9 / 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:

Very Poor – standard falls well below what is acceptable.

Poor – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.

Competent – routine rather than especially interesting.

Good – well conceived and executed

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	The choice of themes and material was entirely appropriate for the companies artistic vision and it was a great idea and process to base the piece around interviews with those effected. There's a whole play in the process itself which would be interesting to hear about some time. However I felt overall, whilst containing some good performances and powerful storylines the production was a little prosaic.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	The points were made clearly and with a minimum of fuss. The open forum in the second half was a good idea.

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	Rich language well put together from interviews however I feel it would have been interesting to hear from the power brokers involved in PFI and not just campaigners, users and workers.
2.2	Direction	Competent	The direction was efficient but for me the piece generally was not theatrical enough. I accept that this was probably the intention of the director, not wishing to distract from the words of the people involved, however I would have liked to have seen more incidents restaged rather than simply hearing about them and to have heard more dialogue rather than monologues. Little use was made of the set and video possibilities.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Good	The performances were all good however in casting terms I would have liked to have seen a wider range of ages and backgrounds.
2.4	Use of Music ¹	Competent	A little use of recorded music. Discreet.

¹ 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.

2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	Competent	See previous comments about theatricality. Little use of movement or choreography.
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Competent	The set and video screen were appropriate for small scale touring purposes and supported the action but didn't add a great deal and were made little use of.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	A relatively simple piece technically was professionally delivered without a noticeable hitch.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	An almost full house enjoyed the show and two thirds remained to take part in the second half discussion with company and a Euro MP.

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	Suitable
3.2	Information/interpretive material at venue ³	A simple but helpful programme was available free of charge. It was not clear if this was available in large print, Braille, audio etc.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	Good pre-publicity clearly setting out the shows agenda
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Fine

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

³ These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

⁴ 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

3.5	External signage and signposting	As a stranger to Paisley I found the Arts Centre very difficult to drive to and not clearly signposted
3.6	Internal directional signage	Fine
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Good although the coffee bar is a little cluttered for easy wheelchair access. Very helpful staff.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Fine
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 ⁵	Fine. In the programme and on the flyer.

⁵ 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.