

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: 7:84 : Traverse Theatre

Title of Event: Reasons to be Cheerful

Type of Event: (e.g. performance)

Date of Visit: 6th April 2004

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 a Council Officer, as indicated at the end of the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work, 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

1.1 Vision and Imagination.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The play was written recently in response to the stagnation in Scottish politics. The overall arch of the piece was ambitious, and whilst reflecting accurately the nature of current labour and socialist politic in Scotland, it did not offer anything new within that particular framework. It reinforced the notion of stagnation and a loss of collective purpose. The play encouraged the view that positive personal contributions and responses to current predicaments is a solution when collective action is no longer an option. The audience and actors were strongly connected to a core set of values. A strong sense of a Scottish collective view was present.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The arguments were clear, the play was cast well. The set supported the action. The audience was left in no doubt as to the views of the writer and the company. The company delivered its aims, and the objective of the play declared in the programme.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

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

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

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Strongly scripted, fast paced and sharply written. The script was strong, and the three characters revealed different colours of the arguments and concerns currently moving through Scottish politics. The script was accurate and funny, and its knowingness appealed to the audience, constantly pulling it into the action and the concerns of its three protagonists. The plot between the three characters cleverly underscored the tensions currently faced in Scottish politics.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Strong casting, clear action. Supported the script.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.5 Standard of performers- where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Strong cast, well positioned for their roles. All three gave strong performances, and interacted well.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.6 Use of music – 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 part, and what effect this had on the quality of the production.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Relevant incidental music used in interludes.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: None
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.8 Design – including set, costume and lighting design. Please take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue, and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Simple stylistic set used with video footage used for window. Gave strong sense of place in Glasgow.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.9 Technical Standards – please comment on whether the production was professionally presented from a technical point of view.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Good
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.10 Overall production – was the production successful overall in relation to any stated aims (e.g. in the programme or other printed material, and stated aims and objectives)

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The production delivered all it claimed to do the programme notes, and within the objectives of 7:84. The audience enjoyed the piece, and seemed hungry for this kind of work. It was full of different ages, but mostly people of an age who would question how the shifts within our system have happen in the move from Thatcher to Blair, and where this leaves them with their political beliefs. The audience listened, and were strongly drawn into the play due to its polemical nature and also because they seemed to be searching for clarity. "Reasons to be Cheerful" showed a circular nature to political argument, whilst also pulling a political sub-text through the plot. The event was well produced, written and presented and provided a satisfying event for its audience.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?

Yes

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.

Full, very positive, and warmly received

2. Management of Event

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.

2.1 Was the venue suitable for the event?

Yes

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

Good

2.3 Publicity/Pre-Publicity for the Event (leaflets, posters, etc)

- range, content and when and where available. Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Please also view and comment on the company's website where one is advertised. Comment on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information.

Good

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment
- location
- external signposting
- internal directional signing
- access and provision for disabled people
- timing of event

All good, as you would expect of FOH at Traverse

2.5 Customer service

- quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering).

Good

3. Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding (if applicable)

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 and 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, and computer programmes etc. “

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

Yes amply present

Name: Sally Hobson

Date: 20th April 2004

Advisor

X

Scottish Arts Council Officer

(Please tick above as appropriate)