



Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** 7:84 at the Palace, Kilmarnock

**Title of Event:** Private Agenda

**Type of Event:** Performance

**Date of Visit:** 08/09/2004

**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.)

Poor. This came across as a political polemic with little to engage emotionally or intellectually, regardless of whether one would agreed or disagreed with the politics within the piece. The company aims to create political energising theatre and certainly the subject matter was contemporary, although it missed any opportunities to fit the issues of PFI within a wider political context. The company also states that it aims to entertain and produce work of high quality – which this production did not deliver.

The idea of having post-show discussion is entirely appropriate for the piece (although describing it as Part Two of the production might have been misleading for some people?)

**Name:** Jaine Lumsden

**Date:** 24/09/2004

**Advisor**  *relevant title*

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*Please tick the*

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	Poor	The method of getting the source material is not original, but is a good idea for a piece dealing with a contemporary political issue. However, the treatment of the material was unimaginative and lacked any dramatic impact.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Competent	The individual statements/opinions were clearly communicated. The overall message about PFI was also clear.

## 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	Poor	The source materials for the script were verbatim reports from people working within the public sector. This had the potential to create an interesting script and some of the individual pieces had genuine human interest. However, the treatment of the material was very limited. Obviously some of the material was edited and amalgamated - but that appeared to be all that had been done – resulting in a string of very short scenes with no obvious linkage, no overall development of theme and little variation of mood.
2.2	Direction	Poor	By Lorenzo Mele. His scope was limited by the fragmented nature and multiple parts for the actors of the piece. This meant the actors had to repeatedly go on and offstage, coming back as different characters. Directorially this was achieved with no physical problems, but it was uninspired and pedestrian.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Competent	This was a demanding piece for the four actors as they had to play multiple parts with quick changes throughout and the script gave them no opportunity to make the characters appear anything but two-dimensional. That said, they all worked hard and gave convincing performances given the limitations of the script and form of the piece.

2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	N/A	
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	N/A	
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	Competent	<p>Set design by Francis Gallup. There were some obvious practical requirements for the set (exits and places for actors to quick change etc., video screen) These were provided, but there was no obvious connection between the set and the production.</p> <p>Lighting design by Dave Shea was appropriate for the production.</p> <p>The video footage was incredibly literal and unimaginatively treated. It added nothing to the production.</p> <p>Costume design was simple and appropriate to the practical requirement of the piece.</p>
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Competent	Professionally presented with no obvious problems.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Competent	Between 40 and 50 people. Reasonable reaction. Approximately 20 people stayed behind for the post show discussion, which seems a fairly good percentage.

<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. 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	Seemed fine. Space for post show discussion was suitable in scale for this type of event.
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	Informative free programme.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Listings, flyers.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/A
3.5	External signage and signposting	None that I've noticed on the way from the station.
3.6	Internal directional signage	Fine
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Fine
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Seemed suitable.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Friendly.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	Acknowledged appropriately.

<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.