

## THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL

### ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

**Organisation/Venue:** 7:84 Theatre Company  
**Title of Event:** The Trial  
**Type of Event:** Performance  
**Date of Visit:** 2 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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: This production used edited excerpts from the hearing that decided on the expulsion of the Labour MP George Galloway on the basis of charges brought against him by the party. As the so-called trial had taking place within the previous months, this was a topical issue to dramatise. Given that the event took place within the MPs parliamentary constituency it was also particularly relevant and indeed sensitive. Thus the company demonstrated its political awareness and a commitment to take on controversial and immediate subjects in this project.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>X</b>	
Excellent		

### 1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The performances were all clear and very easily understood. What was lacking was a context for the event. No doubt most of the audience were well aware of the context, but this should not have been assumed for all those attending. I do not recall if the date of the events portrayed was given (certainly not in the programme). Nor was there any information available on the provenance of the text. I understand that the text consisted of edited extracts from the hearing transcript, but this was not made clear to the audience. If edited, by whom? It might have been possible that the text had been a fictionalised version of events, and again this was not made clear.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>X</b>	
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: AS indicated above the text was derived from the hearing's transcript. As such it did just manage to sustain interest, but it lacked real dramatic tension. Nevertheless I felt that the context of its presentation in front of that audience in this venue did lend it a frisson of excitement that the text in itself did not command.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

**1.4 Direction**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The direction (Lorenzo Mele) was good and moved this essentially static piece well.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>X</b>	
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: The performers were all capable although there was a sense that the tone and rhetorical mannerisms were perhaps learned from Film and TV dramatisations of courtroom dramas rather than insight or observation. All performers worked from scripts and this worked fine. Again, there was nothing in the programme to indicate why this was the case.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>X</b>	
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: n/a
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: n/a
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: This was essentially a staged reading and the set consisted of tables and chairs-there was no stage lighting as such.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
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: There was one mike in use and that worked fine
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
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: An interesting idea that was well executed. Given the nature of the subject matter and the context of its presentation, I think that a more considered approach would have included contextualisation and attribution of the editing of the text in order that the audience would feel secure in a critical approach to it as a piece of theatre.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>X</b>	
Excellent		

**1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?**

Yes- the audience appeared to very politically aware-not to say partisan in their attitude to New Labour.

**1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.**

A full house- a little over 100 I think. The audience was very attentive and made a number of interjections during the performance. Response at the end was enthusiastic

## 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?

*Not a standard performance venue, but appropriate for this kind of event. The company had gone to some effort to create a welcoming atmosphere with drinks and books on offer.*

Yes

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

*As mentioned above, the programme did not provide proper contextual information on the provenance of the text or about how the production came to being-e.g. what was the rehearsal period, etc.*

### 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.

*I heard about this through email invitation, and did not see any other form of publicity*

### 2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment – *n/a*
- location - *good*
- external signposting - *fair*
- internal directional signing – *n/a*
- access and provision for disabled people - *not sure. The ground floor was all on one level.*

- timing of event - *around one hour 10. A trifle long considering the nature of the material.*

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.

*Appropriate*

**Name: David Taylor**

**Date: April 2004**

Advisor  Scottish Arts Council Officer   
(Please tick above as appropriate)