



Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** 7:84 at The Palace

**Title of Event:** Boiling A Frog

**Type of Event:** performance

**Date of Visit:** 05/03/2005

**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.

**Competent** An entertaining play that did not quite manage to reach the full potential that the subject matter offered.

**Name:** Jaine Lumsden

**Date:** 14/04/05

**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	Competent	This was an adaptation of a popular book about political corruption mixed with the worlds of the Catholic Church and PR. This was a potentially interesting combination which was never quite fully realised. It concentrated on the narrative and humour, while failing to make any political point.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Competent	A fairly complex story which entailed some doubling for the actors. However on the whole the story was clearly communicated. Underlying themes of the piece less so (see above.)

## 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	Competent	Adaptation of Christopher Brookmyre's novel by Christopher Deans. (I am not familiar with the original so can't comment whether the play remained faithful to the book.) This was a very fragmented script with lots of short scenes. This was necessary to unfold the narrative, but was a little disjointed at times. The first half of the play in effect set the scene for the second, introducing characters and their histories. While Deans needed to impart all of this information for the story to make sense, it resulted in a slow start for the piece. Perhaps inevitably some of the characters, especially the more minor parts, were verging on archetypes. The humour of the script tended to aim at the lowest common denominator and was of a fairly basic sort (for example the use of bad language.)
2.2	Direction	Competent	By Lorenzo Mele. He managed the episodic nature of the script well, ensuring that the story remained clear. The first half lacked variety of pace and mood and overall would have benefited from stronger direction. Some of the actors seemed underused, especially Kate Dickie. The piece was directed to emphasise the humour, possibly at the expense of any deeper political message or comment.

2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Competent	Competent ensemble acting. Many of the actors were required to play multiple parts, which they undertook professionally with each separate character portrayed convincingly. Some of the cameo characters were two-dimensional, but this was partly because of the nature of the script as opposed to the skills of the actors.
2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	Competent	Pre-recorded. Worked well within the context of the production.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography		N/A No choreography as such.
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	Competent	The set was versatile as it had to serve as office, prison etc. While some of the moving parts used to indicate a change of scene worked well, some were unnecessarily fiddly and provided almost too much detail, leading to a slightly cluttered and overropped stage.  The lighting design was appropriate to the production and helped to delineate the various different settings.
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		c. 100 Reasonable if not ecstatic reaction.

### 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.*

<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

<b>3.</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comments</b>
3.1	Suitability of the venue for the event	Fine
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	Programmes – reasonably informative with a design that was appropriate for the play.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Listings.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/A – ticket arranged by theatre.
3.5	External signage and signposting	None that I'm aware of.
3.6	Internal directional signage	Adequate
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Disabled lift for access to theatre.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Fine – seemed appropriate.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Friendly front of house and bar staff.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	Acknowledged.

<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).

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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.