

**THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL**  
**SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** The Arches

**Title of Event:** Waiting for Godot

**Type of Event:** (e.g. performance, work in progress, opens rehearsal etc) **Performance**

**Date of Visit:** Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2003

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 simplicity and minimalism of every aspect of the show (direction; acting; set; lighting design; costumes) let the humanity and the comedy of the play shine. The vision produced an exciting mixture of roughness, simplicity and professional delivery which let the text stand for itself and left the interpretation to the imagination of the audience.
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 text was delivered in a very simple, straightforward and effective way. I must admit that I have never heard Samuel Beckett's words as loud and clear in any other production before. Also I encountered new lines, subtleties and interpretations rather than concentrating on the obvious parts of the text.
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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Samuel Beckett made accessible and relevant for a Glasgow/Scottish audience encompassing an international and universal flair.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	√	

#### 1.4 Direction

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Combining minimalist elements; clear stage direction, made the text obvious. Poetic, simple, human and funny.
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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Three out of four performers had a great stage presence, whilst one performer was obviously a screen actor. Therefore the duo Vladimir and Estragon was slightly out of balance. I am sure that this will have matured after a few performances.
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: 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: Minimal but effective use: hat routines; some simple step combinations and 'foot work' in duos and trios.
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: Set, costume and lighting were suitably un-eventful and added to the feeling of the play. Two simple lighting stages: one for day, one switch (rather than fade) to night. Ingenious use of Concierge character pulling a red curtain at the beginning and end of first and second act adding to the atmosphere of eternal condemnation of the characters to wait.
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: In my opinion this production achieves 'The Arches' aim to

Very Poor		reflect cultural aspirations and interest of the local Glasgow community by making Beckett accessible and relevant to a Scottish audience; whilst giving the production a timeless and European flair, achieving its' cosmopolitan aspiration - capturing the Scottish identity and keeping it universal and relevant.
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:
Very Poor		<p>Yes. The programme states: “The Arches present ‘ a classic of all classic plays where two tramps famously wait for the arrival of their friend Godot...and wait.. and wait... or as a French critic at the first production in Paris said – ‘ nothing happens...twice.”</p> <p>A huge success showing “a wonderfully existentialistic piece about the very meaning of life” and also making it “hilariously funny – incorporating the very best tragic and comic elements of great theatre.”</p>
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	√	

1.11 **Was the performance appropriate for the audience?**  
YES very much so.

1.12 **Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.**  
80 people; Enthusiastic reception and applause at the end.  
Some quotes of audience members during intermission: “Absolutely brilliant. The best ‘Waiting for Godot’ I have ever seen.”  
“Excellent!”

## 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?

The location was perfect: on the road/under a bridge feeling; trains rattling; two vagabonds philosophising about life.

Unfortunately the only draw back was that the venue was very, very hot.

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

- range, quantity and clarity.  
Good range (Arches programme; leaflet; posters; review display)  
Good quality: huge posters: size and style suitable for environment  
Review display: clear and inviting;

## 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.

A good range of material was available in good time. An extensive range of newspaper articles in national newspaper about the Beckett season and 'Waiting for Godot' (I.e. Articles in the Big Issue; The Herald; The Scotsman) as well as small previews. (5 reasons to see; Hot Ticket Planner; Preview; Critic's choice). One four star review by Neil Cooper (The Herald)

## 2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment - **very easy**
- location – **very accessible**
- external signposting - **good; understated but clear**
- internal directional signing - **good; any lacks (due to the size of the venue) are made up by clear announcements and staff directing the audience.**
- access and provision for disabled people - **good**
- timing of event - **good**

2.5 Customer service

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

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.

**The Scottish Arts Council is mentioned in all publicity material in an obvious way. The logo appeared in black and white on the leaflets and programmes; full colour in the brochure and website and red and white on the posters.**

**Name: Magdalena Schamberger**

**Date: 27th October 2003**

Advisor  Scottish Arts Council Officer

*(Please tick above as appropriate)*