



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Edinburgh International Festival and Tron Theatre at the Royal Lyceum Theatre

Title of Event: The Wonderful World of Disoccia

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 1 September 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.)

Excellent

A brave and innovative piece that challenged conventions of form. The humour was dangerous and provocative. The production felt rich in content and accomplished in delivery. A surprise that delighted and provoked in equal measure.

Name: David Taylor

Date: _10 September_2004

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please tick the relevant title

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:

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, taking account of the following:

1.	Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
1.1	Vision and imagination	Excellent	A highly original and risky conception involving two unequal acts in terms of length and style. The topic itself is problematic and the adventurous treatment of the theme all contributed to an innovative and exciting mix.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Excellent	The play and production were both extremely accessible and delivered in a clear and coherent way. The content was deliberately incoherent but had its own internal logic.

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	Excellent	The script was extremely entertaining on one hand and yet harrowing in its portrayal of the miseries of mental illness. It was challenging in some of its subject matter and its black humour. The “expression”, as the author styled it, of mental illness it was disturbing and hilarious at once. At times the humour was almost infantile but the absurdist approach created a fascinating world of fantasy to rival the Land of Oz and Wonderland with its surrealist and archetypal images and situations. The contrasting sparseness of the rendition of the naturalistic hospital ward and interactions was chilling in its clinicism and its numbing repetitiveness. That said the latter act feel into some clichéd, though not doubt accurate, observations about the “pass the parcel” approach to clinical care.
2.2	Direction	Excellent	The production was a delight in terms of the action and narrative of the first act. The fast pace and visual humour, allied to the verbal tricks kept the audience totally engaged. There was so much going on that one did not have time to get bored. The brave juxtaposition of fantasy and reality paid off.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Excellent	The lead actress was compelling and held the attention from beginning to end. All of the performances were of a good standard, but the central role was clearly the most demanding and the most significant.

2.4	Use of Music ¹	Good	Good use of atmospheric and effective recorded music.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	N/A	
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Excellent	Imaginative and surreal costuming that usefully illustrated the surreal world of Disoccia. One flaw was the scapegoat's headpiece which was not well fitted and caused irritating distraction. The main set elements was a carpeted ramp in act one that worked well as a neutral space within which the fantasy/nightmare could be acted out. The second act hospital environment was also well realised. Lighting was also of a high standard.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	The interval was too long-as I understand it as a result of the difficult set turnaround. Otherwise the technical delivery was good.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Some –a small number left at the interval- this may have been to do with the interval being too long. Generally, though the response was enthusiastic.

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	Good
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ³	The usual high standard of programme material

¹ 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.

² Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule

3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	AS per usual EIF promotions
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	As above
3.5	External signage and signposting	Good
3.6	Internal directional signage	Good
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Good
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The division between the two acts was unbalanced and the piece was disrupted by an over-extended interval.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Good
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ⁵	Good

³ These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

⁴ 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

⁵ 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.