

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Mull Theatre/ Brunton Theatre

Title of Event: Kidnapped

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: Saturday 1st November 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 piece was very cogent and clear. Well adapted from the novel that connected well to much of the main action. Hard to re-create the vastness of the Scottish Highlands and Islands on a small stage, however the company squeezed it all in!
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The text communicated the action of the book. Characters often took a little while to claim the space since the action is very complicated and things move around a lot during the journey. There were some strong moments throughout, such as the narrative told on board ship.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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: Script seemed very accurate to the telling of the book. The story was clear, short scenes sometimes made it hard locate the action of each scene, and also finding the characters.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Stage used well, set supported the nature of the page-to-stage adaptation. Music overused in first half of piece to the point that is hindered the telling of the story instead of supporting the text. Some very good contrasts between scenes to create a strong break-up of the narrative. Direction supported and understood the script. The final aspects of story unravelled well, and with good pace, and the parting of Balfour and Stewart was nicely handled. At other points the action dragged; maybe out of duty to the book, the creative team felt it necessary to include so much of the narrative.
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Some good performances throughout the company, no weakness in casting. The overall company connection felt strong and measurable. A lot of doubling required to deliver the many different characters - this was not a big distraction in such a large company.
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Whilst there was nothing wrong with the music itself, it (purely in my opinion) was dreadfully overused in the first half. Well played, and interesting composition, but just heavy handed. Fiddler on stage worked fine.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: There was no choreography, but some fight sequences. These worked fine.
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Overall design had the traditional Robin Peoples' hallmark of a huge number of options unravelling from a large box. Always entertaining and clever to watch how the options reveal themselves. Costumes were very good. Lighting was a basic touring rig, with some extra specials and seemed to work.
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Technical standards good.
Very Poor		
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Overall the adaptation of "Kidnapped" worked in an authentic and accurate way. It was very true to the spirit of the book and this is a good product for touring around the circuit that Mull Theatre normally inhabits. The standards overall were very professional. The audience responded well. Not a lot of young people in the audience, and the majority in Brunton, as an estimate were about 50 yrs and upwards.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience? Yes

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.
Three-quarters full

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?

Yes

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

Good

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.

Good

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment
- location
- external signposting
- internal directional signing
- access and provision for disabled people
- timing of event

2.5 Customer service

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

All 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.

Yes this appeared on programmes, posters and pre-publicity.

Name: Sally Hobson

Date: 7th January 2003

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

(Please tick above as appropriate)