

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Mull Theatre at Mull Little Theatre
Title of Event: Skylight
Type of Event: performance
Date of Visit: 25/08/2003

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: A broad sweep of universal themes of love and loss, conflicting political ideologies and the moral choices individuals make. The piece examines these through the two main protagonists and their particular choices and relationship.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
Excellent		

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Themes of play and story clearly communicated due to high standard of acting and direction.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	X	

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: By David Hare. An acutely observed play that presents no black or white characters, only shades of grey. All three characters were well-rounded and entirely believable and the dialogue was very natural. The end scene is wonderfully unexpected and adds a very appropriate twist. (It was a great relief that there was no romantic rose tinted ending, which a lesser playwright might have been tempted to do.) There was a wonderful sense of having seen a real slice of these people's lives which will go on afterwards without us observing – probably with no future contact with each other.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	X	

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: By Robert Patterson. This play is very dialogue based, so it could have become static. Paterson used the limited space (sitting room and kitchen doorway) appropriately and realistically to ensure that this didn't happen. The changes in mood appeared to happen effortlessly.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	X	
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: All three actors demonstrated complete conviction in their roles and the standard was universally high. David Fitzgerald (Edward, Tom's son) got the exactly right mixture of teenage arrogance, vulnerability and spontaneity. Beth Marshall (Kyra) was convincing as an ideologically-driven woman, while retaining enough human-ness to make the character sympathetic. John Langford was especially convincing as the disillusioned Tom.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		

Excellent	X	
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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: By Martin Low. Limited use that was appropriate to production.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	x	
Excellent		

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: No choreography as such. See under direction.
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 design by Robin Peoples, scenic artist Alan Melvin. The set was realistic and literal, which was appropriate for the play. The lighting was simple and non-tricksy and also entirely appropriate for the production.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	x	

Excellent		
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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: Professionally presented. No problems.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	X	
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: Director's programme notes state "a love story...funny and bittersweet... (aim to) give the play immediacy..." One of Mull Theatre's stated aims is to produce high quality productions of new work and revivals. The production met both of the above extremely well. It did indeed make the audience laugh while simultaneously wincing in recognition. Thought –provoking and stimulating piece with high production standards
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	X	

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?
Yes

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.
Sold out – (c. 40 – Mull Theatre is wee.) Very good reaction. It appeared to have stimulated debate regarding some of the choices made by the characters with some members of the audience as they left the auditorium

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 (space has definite limitations due to size, but as the production was designed for this space this didn't present problems from the audiences' point of view at least.)

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

Posters, good programme with an interesting piece on the playwright and brief director's notes.

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.

Unsure

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment N/A Invited
- location For target audience fine, although you need a car to get there
- external signposting fine
- internal directional signing N/A – it's too small to need it
- access and provision for disabled people Problematic– steep hill to get to

there, no specific facilities to ease access

- timing of event Fine

2.5 Customer service

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

Very friendly.

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.
SAC acknowledged on programme, poster, website.

Name: Jaine Lumsden

Date: 16/10/2003

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

(Please tick above as appropriate)