



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Mull Theatre (MT) at the Brunton Theatre in Mussleburgh

Title of Event: Jekyll & Hyde (JH)

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

Date of Visit: Saturday 2nd October 2004 at 7:30 pm

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

With this adaptation of JH, Mull Theatre succeeds in telling an old fashioned story extremely well: MT's version is a theatrically interesting and surprising production marked by excellent direction and an excellent ensemble cast.

Name: Magdalena Schamberger

Date: 10/10/2004

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	Mull Theatre's version of JH tells a complex story in a very clear and simple manner. The production succeeds in its ambitions "to probe beyond the veneer of civilised society, through the hypocrisy and guilt of the main characters. This entertaining and theatrically ambitious production will, we hope, still have the ability to shock." (Programme note). JH is equally entertaining and daring. Alasdair McCrone's vision goes beyond a simple retelling of the story and makes this production relevant for modern as well as more conventional audiences.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Excellent	Extremely good and clear.

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	Good	A very good and interesting adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's Jekyll & Hyde by Robert Paterson and Alasdair McCrone. However some passages and scenes seemed very short and appeared to interrupt the flow of the narrative.
2.2	Direction	Excellent	Excellent direction by Alasdair McCrone (AMC) in regards to the story, dramaturgy, cast as well as production values. In particular AMC succeeds in creating two very different characters for Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and finding surprising as well as interestingly simple ways of transforming from one into the other - allowing one character to be overtaken by the other and vice versa, exploring shades of good and evil in both.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Excellent	Alan Steele as Henry Jekyll and Kevin Lennon as Edward Hyde were both multi faceted in the portrayal of their characters. They were supported by an excellent ensemble cast of actors, many of which in dual roles: Iain McCrae; Alan McPherson and Stephen Clyde. I would particularly like to point out Beth Marshall in the dual role of Sarah and

			Sophie who gave an extremely strong and convincing performance.
2.4	Use of Music ¹	Excellent	The music was recorded. The music and sound effects by Martin Low (ML) were suitable and atmospheric and appeared to be original. However from the programme note it was not entirely clear to me if this assumption was in fact true: ML was merely mentioned as Music and Sound Designer of the production, without reference being made to the originality of music. One song was sung live by Beth Marshall.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography		N/A
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	On first impression the set design by Alicia Hendrick was original, interesting and appeared highly suitable. However during the production it appeared at times restrictive, domineering the stage as well as some elements of it (doors!) slightly flimsy. The lighting design by Mick Andrew was competent but did not always accommodate the vast differences between inside and outside locations as well as creating different locations in the same space. It did at times not assist in resolving the restrictions of the set. For example: Both set and lighting design did not succeed in creating a nightclub atmosphere on the set. Shirley Robertson's costumes were very good and suitable.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	The technical standards accommodated the complex structure of the piece well.

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

2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Excellent	150 - 170 audience members. The production appeared very appropriate for attending mature and family audiences, entertaining and challenging them at the same time. Enthusiastic applause at the end; two curtain calls. Two audience comments overheard in the bar after the performance: “It thought that was great”; “I really enjoyed that.”
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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	Very suitable.
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ³	A small display consisting of one poster and one production photograph was mounted in the foyer. The Brunton Theatre brochure mentioning JH and leaflets were available at the box office. Programmes were available inside the theatre. Overall the information was accessible and clear.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	I was aware of an article in “The List”, mentioning the Mull Theatre productions as one of two JH productions currently touring Scotland. I was also aware of the leaflets available in advance of the production. MT’s website is easy to use and features easily accessible and comprehensive information.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	I have never been able to speak to somebody directly when calling the Brunton Theatre during box office hours. I usually have to leave a message. This particular time my call was returned one day later at a time that was not really convenient for me. This can be annoying.
3.5	External signage and signposting	Very 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

3.6	Internal directional signage	Very good.
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Very good.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Starting time was 7:30pm and the performance lasted for 2 hours 20 minutes with a 15-minute interval. Very suitable timing for both audience and production
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Box office staff, front of house staff and bar staff were professional and friendly. I was surprised to see that the cafe was closed in advance of the performance - although it was a Saturday night.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ⁵	The Scottish Arts Council Logo was clearly displayed on all published materials (posters, leaflets and programme). The logo is prominently featured on MT's website.

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.