



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Mull Theatre at the Masonic Hall, Tobermory

Title of Event: Lonesome West

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 09/09/2004

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 The success of the piece is that it worked on so many levels – from twisted and black humour to pathos, while offering a vision of the hell that is other people. In my opinion, this is a difficult script to produce well as it is very complex. The company managed to convey this complexity and delivered an engaging piece of theatre with very high production standards.

Name: Jaine Lumsden

Date: 29/09/04

Advisor
relevant title

Scottish Arts Council Officer

Please tick the

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:

1-Very Poor – standard falls well below what is acceptable.

2-Poor – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.

3-Competent – routine rather than especially interesting.

4-Good – well conceived and executed

5-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	Good	There was a clear vision of a complex script which a poorer production could have delivered in a "straight for laughs" farcical manner. This production had the ambition and strength to deliver the script at all of its levels.(see under script)
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	Clearly communicated script (it took a little time to become attuned to the accents, but these were right for the production.)

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	By Martin McDonagh In my opinion the strongest, most interesting of his Leenane Trilogy. The dialogue was realistic even when the action verged on the surreal. This was a multi-layered script where the most simple remark was capable simultaneously of many interpretations. This was a well-crafted play, which used very black humour to great dramatic effect.
2.2	Direction	Excellent	By Alasdair McCrone. This was very skilfully done to allow the actors to portray the many meanings of the piece without ever descending into the realms of farce, the humour was well-handled (and necessary in what is a very black piece) and its delivery accompanied by twists. Limited movement as the piece was essentially quite static – though the fights between the brothers were suitably violent and explosive. Good switches in mood and pace throughout.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Excellent	In my opinion a very difficult play to perform well as none of the characters are exactly as they initially seem, while all of them also fulfil a (admittedly dark) humorous role. The cast all managed this dichotomy convincingly. The portrayal of the relationship between the brothers was compelling. The quick switches of mood between despair and almost farce were well-handled.

2.4	Use of Music ¹	Competent	Some pre-recorded music which was appropriate for the production.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	N/A	No choreography as such – see under direction
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Competent	Set provided what was required for the production (interior of a house, exterior location at night.) Costume design was simple and entirely appropriate. Lighting design hampered by the lack of facilities available in the hall, but appropriate.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Competent	Some problems with the lighting (it transpired that the lighting board had crashed during the first half. The operator coped well with this and it would probably not have been apparent to an audience members with no first hand experience of operating lights.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Excellent	Very good reaction from a nearly full capacity audience.

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	The venue has severe limitations – the production worked but this was despite the venue.
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ³	Well designed programme. Venue doesn't allow for any other materials to be displayed.

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

3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	Flyers.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/A invitation
3.5	External signage and signposting	Billboard on street – acceptable in the circumstances.
3.6	Internal directional signage	N/A – it's a village hall in effect.
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Difficult access – it's a village hall in effect which has not had the necessary work undertaken.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Fine
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Friendly front of house.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ⁵	Not on programme (this has been discussed with the company.)

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.