



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Scottish Youth Theatre at Byre/WYSIWYG

Title of Event: Dying for it

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 30th 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.)

Good – a good example of strong, issue based youth theatre. The production didn't preach but asked its audience to think about the issue of STIs from a young person's perspective. Energy, commitment and humour from the young cast.

Name: Nick Fearnle

Date: 18/10/04

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	Good	A difficult/sensitive subject that could so easily have been presented as a 'lecture' or in an embarrassing self-conscious style. A real challenge to let young people speak as themselves without the piece descending into schoolboy humour.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	This was not a play about giving the 'facts' about STIs but rather about raising awareness that STIs are an issue for today's young people. The production avoided the pitfall of dramatising a health department pamphlet.

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	Competent	On the whole the language and humour was realistic although setting the play amongst students would perhaps create a barrier for many young people. I also felt that the script did go over much of the ground more than once and it could have been cut by 10 minutes (Playwright David Cosgrove)
2.2	Direction	Good	Always a challenge with youth theatre to involve the whole cast in a meaningful way rather than just dishing out lines. Characters were clearly defined and the action was well paced. (Director Mary McCluskey)
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments	Good	With a youth theatre cast standards are likely to be variable. I'm not sure how this cast was selected (ability, availability?) but on the whole the performances were good. Some of the cast took a while to 'warm up' - a strong performance from the redheaded, comic character who is one of the central characters (sorry can't recall his character's name)
2.4	Use of Music ¹	Competent	Recorded. Appropriate use, especially dance/party scenes

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.

2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	Competent	Youth theatre shows tend to have lots of folk to move around. This cast was about 15 strong (so small by YT standards!) and were working in a fairly small studio space, but space was used well. One dance routine to a song at a party (always a challenge 'the party' scene) was longer than necessary but on the whole this aspect of the production was successful. (Choreography Carla Duggan)
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	Three rostra of varying heights linked by two walkways. These represented different places – clinic, bedrooms etc and bordered the main, open acting area (Designer Finlay McLay). Flexible and suitable for touring to different spaces. Costume was very much the cast's own with the addition of the odd wig etc. Well lit.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	I am assuming most of the technical/stage management side of the production was carried out by SYT members with some professional support. Lighting and sound cues seemed to run smoothly.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Although this was a YT production I saw it at WYSIWYG and the audience was I think virtually all adult. It was very well received by the audience, which included, promoters, performers and arts officers. Approx 30-40 in 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	Very good venue. Studio space used, this worked well
3.2	Information/interpretive material at venue ³	As this was part of WYSIWYG delegates had received a pack. SYT also handed out a programme.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	Delegate pack

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.

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

3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/a
3.5	External signage and signposting	Good
3.6	Internal directional signage	Good
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Yes
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Start 8pm. 1hr 40 mins without a break. It was right for the production not to have a break but 100 mins after seeing a number of shows was quite long. As stated above I think production 10 mins too long.
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	Credit on website but not programme

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.