

**THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL**  
**ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** TAG / Traverse  
**Title of Event:** The Birthday Party  
**Type of Event:** Performance  
**Date of Visit:** 16 October 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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

The Birthday Party is an interesting play which represented a new departure in the fifties. However, in my view, TAG's fairly ordinary approach to this production did not represent challenging theatre for young audiences of today. Young people could have access to similar themes, characters and styles by attending a range of productions/theatre companies. In my view there was nothing about this production that provided an engaging and meaningful experience or that demonstrated TAG as a theatre company dedicated to creating work specifically for young audiences.

**1.2 Clarity of Communication.**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

The plot was easy to follow.

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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	
Excellent		

**1.4 Direction**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	
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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>x</b>	
Excellent		

The off stage drumming at the beginning (and end) was very good and suggested to me that we would be enjoying something dynamic and quirky. However my expectations were unfulfilled.

**1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

NA

**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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

The set was suitably quirky/ordinary however I felt it belonged more to Abigail's Party than the Birthday Party.

**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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>x</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

**1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?**

The audience was mixed. There were quite a few adults/elderly people attending as well as some young people. My comments re young people should be noted here.

**1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.**

Full house. Reaction was fine.

## 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?

*Suitable*

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

*The programme looked good. As mentioned with the music the visual image on the programme raised my expectations beyond my actual experience of the production.*

*There was a talk afterwards led by TAG's education officer which I could not attend due to reliance on public transport.*

### 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.

*Publicity in general was good and enticing.*

### 2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment *NA*
- location *Central*
- external signposting *Adequate*
- internal directional signing *Adequate*
- access and provision for disabled people – *The studio space is not easy for disabled or infirm audiences given the high step based seating bank within a limited space.*

- timing of event *Fine*

## 2.5 Customer service

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

*The box office staff are usually friendly and helpful. On this occasion I waited approx 10 minutes to pick up my tickets due to availability of only one staff member who was having to deal with an enquiry.*

## 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.  
Conditions of grant met.

*Appropriate acknowledgement was given.*

**Name:** Angela Hogg  
**Date:** 15 November 2003

**Advisor**  **Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*(Please tick above as appropriate)*