



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

**Organisation/Venue:** TAG at St Dominics Primary School, North Lanarkshire

**Title of Event:** King Lear

**Type of Event:** Workshop/performance project

**Date of Visit:** 11 November 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.**

A very well planned and executed piece of interactive, educational promenade performance. A high quality arts experience was provided for the young participants.

**Name:** Angela Hogg

**Date:** \_03/02/2005

**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	TAG used a specially created (shortened) adaptation of the Shakespeare classic to provide a high quality interactive arts and education experience. Young P6/P7 participants spent the morning working with professional actors/facilitators exploring and interpreting the story and its themes which ultimately prepared them to become part of an interactive performance in the afternoon. The method used inspired and motivated the participants to engage with the programme. A great deal of knowledge based planning had clearly taken place to bring about such positive results. Simple devices added layers of fun as well as providing meaningful pointers for participants to understand and engage with the story/action.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Excellent	The work developed in the morning prepared the young people extremely well for their involvement in the afternoon performance as actors and audience members. They appeared to have a clear understanding of the underlying themes and overall story line. During the process there were moments when the language of Shakespeare was used and backed up by modern day interpretation. I particularly liked the game where each participant was given a statement from the play which they had to restate using modern day language. This resulted in a whole section of the play being completely re- interpreted by the children. Themes of the play were often linked to modern day themes which not only enhanced understanding but also provided valuable and educational social studies opportunities. The actors /facilitators had very clear diction.

## 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	An excellent 1 hour adaptation by Peter Arnott. It is clear that he put a great deal of thought into ensuring that the aspects used would be of most interest to the young audience. The whole thing came together seamlessly. A good mix of Shakespeare and modern day language. A great opportunity for young people to appreciate Shakespeare and language in general was provided. A positive message which clearly came through invited participants to <i>be true to themselves for life is too short.</i>

2.2	Direction	Excellent	<p>The play was very well directed by Guy Hollands. A simple approach using minimal set, props, costumes and sound effects. There was no music or lights. The power of the piece came through the language, characterisation, interaction of characters and use of space. The educational programme was very well directed by the actors/facilitators thus enhancing the participants' understanding and engagement as performers and promenade audiences. A good pace was maintained and never compromised by the additional responsibility of involving and interacting with the 34 young actors/promenade audiences.</p> <p>A highlight in terms of the direction given to the children was the final advice given about their involvement in the cliff top scene which required them to be truthful and convincing. This was reinforced by a reminder that their part in this was extremely important. The facilitators' approach proved to be very fruitful by provoking huge commitment and relevant engagement from the children during that scene.</p> <p>The only glitch I saw in the facilitation was when they were working on characterisation (in one of the two groups) which seemed to lead one young boy to believe he would be a main character in the final piece. This was because they were working on main characters as well as their own supportive roles. In my view there was scope for more clarity and explanation by the facilitators here to avoid disappointment.</p>
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Excellent	<p>An excellent, convincing cast of professional actors who also had a very relaxed, accessible and skilful approach to working with the young people.</p> <p>The children also provided dedicated and disciplined performances, gelling well with the actors and remembering their cues. They supported the main characters extremely well and appeared to be very comfortable and intuitive about their use of space. It was clear that these participants did receive drama on a fairly regular basis (out of school as confirmed by one teacher). However a great deal of credit for the successful interaction should go to the TAG team.</p>
2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>		N/A

<sup>1</sup> 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		N/A
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design		<p>The design was very good. The set took up most of the hall which was transformed into a magical place. The whole space was under canvas thus creating a discreet world for the action and interaction to take place.</p> <p>The day started with everyone in the hall for an introduction to the play etc before breaking off into 2 groups. While the 2 groups worked in separate spaces this magical set was built in the hall which provided a lovely surprise as well as focussing the attention on the theatrical experience.</p> <p>Simple black and white costumes (which matched the flooring), a mix of old linen and gold painted table and chair on raised platform provided sufficient indication of the era while enhancing the theatrical transformation of the space.</p>
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	Minimal used but well executed
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Excellent	The participants threw themselves wholeheartedly into the event. It provided a meaningful (and challenging) experience for them. The 34 (P6/P7) clearly enjoyed (and were stimulated by) the process.

### 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	<p>The space was adequate and it was clear, overall, that the school welcomed this event however there were a few distractions as outlined below.</p> <p>On more than one occasion someone walked loudly through the set while the children and actors were working together.</p> <p>On more than one occasion someone came to speak</p>

<sup>2</sup> Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule

		<p>to teachers while they were watching the show.</p> <p>A radio was turned on in an adjoining room while the event was taking place.</p> <p>The bell ringing during the event is also distracting however I realise that it would be difficult to cease using it while the work is going on.</p>
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	NA
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Good. A range of information including an in depth teacher's resource pack. The website is very accessible and informative.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	NA
3.5	External signage and signposting	NA
3.6	Internal directional signage	NA
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Accessible.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Timing fitted with school programme. A long day however it was necessary to achieve the desired results. The participants engaged throughout the whole time.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	NA
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	Good.

<sup>3</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>5</sup> 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).

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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.