

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Theatre Babel at the Citizens

Title of Event: A Doll's House

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 24/04/04

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: A strong and definite vision of a classic text was apparent in every aspect of the production.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Clearly delivered (see under direction and acting.)
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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:
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Very Poor		<p>Dramaturgy???</p> <p>Ibsen is perhaps a matter of taste to some audiences, who tend to love him or hate him. The script contains at its kernel issues that are as relevant today as when it was written.</p>
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		<p>By Peter McAllister. He used the space well in what could be a rather stationary play (apart from Nora's dance.) There were good and appropriate changes of moods throughout that reflected the script. Some of the actors could have benefited from stronger direction, especially in the latter half of the play, as the pace of the piece at times accelerated resulting in a loss of the potential dramatic tension.</p> <p>The convention of the actors sitting at the back of the stage rather than exiting was a good idea, but rather spoilt as it was not consistently used,</p>
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.5 Standard of performers- where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		<p>The relationship between Nora (Rebecca Rodgers) and Torvald (Stephen Hogan) was initially portrayed entirely believably. The part of Nora is a difficult one to play well and as the relationship began to break down Rogers failed to entirely convince. She seemed to rush at her part and consequently was less able to portray the full range of complex emotions that her character was going through. The rest of the cast gave solid performances, but the part of Nora is very much at the heart of this play.</p>
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Pre-recorded music that worked very well with the play overall adding atmosphere.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: See under direction Nora's dance is the only choreography as such in the play. This was reasonably well choreographed within the constraints of what would be appropriate to the play.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Relatively simple set design by Graham McLaren that demonstrated a strong overall concept that worked well with the play. The lighting design was excellent, well integrated into the production and very atmospheric. wallpaper was made to fall at the end when the
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Good		
Excellent		

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: When a piece is apparently simple in design concept it is vital that the technical standards are good. This was professionally presented.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
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: The piece had high production values and an obvious strong vision in its presentation. The company aims to reinvestigate and reinvigorate classical theatre while giving it a Scottish perspective. In one sense this production met these objectives – it demonstrated the relevance of the play to today’s audiences. However it was ultimately disappointing to me in that the portrayal of the central character made it difficult to engage either emotionally with her situation or intellectually with the issues at the centre of the play, which meant that the company’s objectives were not in my opinion fully met.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?

Seemed appropriate

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.

Citizens main house. Stalls between half and three quarters full? Reasonable reaction.

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?**

Yes.

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

Well designed high quality programme, which was informative.

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.

Well designed high quality flyers, listings, some preview media coverage.

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment Fine
- location Fine
- external signposting Fine
- internal directional signing Fine
- access and provision for disabled people Fine
- timing of event Fine

2.5 Customer service

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

Good service from box office.

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 home page of the company's website.

Scottish Arts Council Evaluation Form

Acknowledged.

Name: Jaime Lumsden

Date:

Advisor **Scottish Arts Council Officer**

(Please tick above as appropriate)