

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

**Organisation/Venue:** Theatre Babel at Citizens Theatre

**Title of Event:** A Doll's House

**Type of Event:** Theatre Performance

**Date of Visit:** 21<sup>st</sup> April 2004

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 heavy, dark and overbearing sense emanated from this vision of the piece. Ibsen's characters are very well written. The backdrop worked well to reinforce a feeling of what Nora was up against. A strong sense of claustrophobia emerged.
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Good</b>	<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: Clear
Very Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Competent	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Good</b>	<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).

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Difficult to draw conclusion on selection of texts or choices made in the script. This was Babel's preferred presentation of the texts.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

**1.4 Direction**

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Cogent and clear direction. Paced well and the tempo of the piece worked most of the time, although occasionally it raced ahead of itself hysterically.  Very unsure of the laughter from audience. This is a tragic piece without ironic or absurd ballast, so found the laughter quite at odds with the text, and vision. Was this intentional? Read some reviews from other performances that indicated the laughs were also present in audience reaction so clearly not a one-off on the night I saw it. This was Babel's interpretation which they delivered competently and clearly. Classics are open to interpretation.  Strong finish as Nora exits, allowing audience to feel exposed, and connect to breakdown of the marriage.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

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

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> All characters were strongly drawn. Rebecca Rogers (Nora) gave a strong leading performance, if at times she overplayed some of the danger with hysteria, and misunderstood the suffering of Nora's immaturity . Stephen Hogan (Torvald) was overbearing and unremtting. Peter D'Souza (Dr Rank) was overall good, if he touched at times inappropriately on the comic, revealing only some of the profound sense of sadness in this man. Pauline Knowles and Stephen Clyde gave strong supporting roles.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</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.

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Interesting choice of incidental music that supported the historical timing of A Doll's House and the gathering tension created by the director's vision.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

**1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography**

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Apart from Nora's Tarantella there was no choreography, but some movement around exits and entrances to the back.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

**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.

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Simple and strong design by Graham McLaren that worked very well. Lighting very good.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
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: Good
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
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: Theatre Babel has built a reputation for reinvigorating the classics within a Scottish context. This was a well presented theatrical experience. The company showed good attention to detail and delivered a strong piece of professional theatre.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

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

**Yes**

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

**Three-quarters full. This was the opening night in the Citizens.**

**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.

**Was the venue suitable for the event?**

**Yes**

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

- range, quantity and clarity.

**Good selection available, Babel integrated into Citizens' marketing**

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.

Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment **good**
- location **good in terms of being accessible**
- external signposting **good**
- internal directional signing **good**
- access and provision for disabled people **good**
- timing of event **good**

Customer service

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

**Efficient and helpful**

**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*

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*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.

**SAC logo on programme, posters and leaflets.**

**Name: Sally Hobson**

**Date: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2004**

**Advisor**

**X**

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*(Please tick above as appropriate)*