



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Theatre Babel/Gateway Theatre

Title of Event: Macbeth

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: Monday 9<sup>th</sup> August 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. This was a robust and economical production of Shakespeare's Macbeth directed and designed by Graham McLaren.

Name: Sally Hobson

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2004

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:**

**1-Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.

**2-Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.

**3-Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.

**4-Good** – well conceived and executed

**5-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	Strong, bold ideas contained in the design and production concept. We get the idea it's a "dangerous" production since most of the action takes place under the swords hanging precariously above the stage. The soundscape is dark and intense, as is the lighting. They in equal measure support the director's decision to re-tell the story in a bold and confident manner.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	Clear and concise telling of the descent into Macbeth's madness. This production portrays him a foul and murderous bully who with each new murder finds more and more bloodlust. Nothing can stop him after he starts. There is an element of a killing spree in the portrayal.

## 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	Good	Shakespeare is Shakespeare. The re-working was clear and concise. The director took his own bold decisions to re-work the script. This worked well with what he had chosen to present as the overall vision of the piece.
2.2	Direction	Good	Clear, backed up by the design, music and lighting. Robust, and focused on taking a particular line on whom Macbeth might have been. The production felt very West Coast Scottish, showing us a strong sense of a particular kind of Scottish Identity, especially in the portrayal of MacDuff.  The direction was consistent with choices of casting, stage design, costume design, lighting and music.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Good	Overall good. Caught this production early in its run, and the company felt a bit light and disconnected with the core of the production thus compensating by being overly heavy-handed. This may have improved throughout the run. Macbeth's descent into brutality was charted very well by John Kazack. Lady Macbeth felt miscast within such a strong "Scottish dark brooding" production. Too flighty, not pained enough given the clear and precise implication by McLaren that she and Macbeth had lost children, and that this was of great significance. Macbeth seemed to suffer more over the loss of children.

2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	Good	Good, strong and incorporated well into the script. In keeping with the production's vision.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	N/A	
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	Consistent to the style of production.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	Good
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Good, if a little muted

### 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 suitable. Very well presented FOH and technically well set-up.
3.2	Information/interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	Lots of information

<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.

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

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

3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Good
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Not easy. The overall lack of communication between Fringe office and venue can makes thing awkward if your used to picking pre-paid tickets at the venue.
3.5	External signage and signposting	Clear. Good
3.6	Internal directional signage	Clear and good.
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Sorry, didn't check.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good
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 <sup>5</sup>	In lots of different places.

<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). 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.