



Scottish **Arts** Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** Theatre Babel at the Gateway

**Title of Event:** Macbeth

**Type of Event:** Performance

**Date of Visit:** 13/08/2004

**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 visually stunning production whose strength was the depiction of the brutality and violence of the play. The piece had high production standards.

**Name:** Jaine Lumsden

**Date:** 29/08/04

**Advisor**   
*relevant title*

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*Please tick the*

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	A production with strong visual imagery and excellent integration of all production elements.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	On the whole clearly communicated, although occasionally some of Macbeth's speeches were a little mumbled.

## 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	A shortened version by the company that in my opinion worked well.
2.2	Direction	Good	By Graham McLaren. The murder scenes were suitably chilling and genuinely brought out the brutal nature of the character Macbeth and the time that the play was set in. Altogether the violent aspects of the production were convincingly and strongly directed, with good contrasts in method of depiction. The more introspective aspects were less convincing and seemed rather pedestrian and stationary at times. The interdependence of the Macbeths was cleverly directed and hinted at a strong sexual relationship without being too overt. The use of children as the witches was visually interesting but did not work in the production overall. They had no air of mystery and looked awkward and out of place.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Good	John Kazak as Macbeth was good although he was sometimes difficult to hear. Rebecca Rodgers as Lady Macbeth gave a convincing portrayal of the character's mental disintegration displaying increasing vulnerability and verging on hysteria. She failed to convince as the strong manipulative woman that is usually associated with this character.

			<p>Ian Grieve as Macduff was outstanding, especially when he heard the news of his wife and children's deaths that he underplayed perfectly to portray almost unbearable grief.</p> <p>The children playing the witches did their best, but their wooden movements brought a slightly amateur air to what was otherwise a very professional production.</p>
2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	Good	Commissioned music from Anthea Haddow which worked very well within the context of the piece.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	Excellent	Fight director Raymond Short. The violence was very effective (see under direction.)
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	Excellent	Lighting design by Kai Fischer, which was atmospheric, brooding and dark - perfect for the piece. Design by Graham McAllen, which was simple and visually stunning.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	An apparently simple show (no set etc.) so it was vital that it was professionally presented - which it was.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Production seemed appropriate to the audience, which was of a mixed age range. C. ¾ full? Good reaction.

### 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
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<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

3.1	Suitability of the venue for the event	Suitable
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	Posters with a striking image. Informative well-designed programme (though size of font and white lettering on black would have presented problems for some.)
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Well designed good quality flyers, listings, previews
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/A Invitation
3.5	External signage and signposting	Fine
3.6	Internal directional signage	Fine
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Fine
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	This overran by about 15 minutes. This presented transport problems for me, and more importantly may have posed problems for other audience members because it was during the Fringe, where audience members expect shows to run to time to enable them to go to other shows.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Efficient.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	On publicity, but not on handout about the company.

<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). 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."

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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.