



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Theatre Babel at the Citizens

Title of Event: Hedda Gabler

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 24/05/05

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 A beautifully and coherently designed production that concentrated on the individuals' stories somewhat to the detriment of the underlying issues Ibsen explored within his script.

Name: Jaine Lumsden Date: 06/09/05

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	An evident strong overall vision that genuinely integrated all elements of the production. Some strange directorial choices in the portrayal of the central character
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Competent	The story clearly communicated at quite a fast pace. I am familiar with the play and would query how clearly this production communicated the underlying issues that Ibsen was writing about to somebody who was not familiar with the script.

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	This was a company-updated version of a translation by Archer and Gosse This is a “classic” that should have resonance with contemporary audiences. This production didn’t achieve this as well as it might. (See under direction.)
2.2	Direction	Competent	<p>By Graham McLaren McLaren directed Hedda as a very unsympathetic character, which made it difficult for the audience to fully understand her behaviour. The lack of sympathy for her meant that Ibsen’s comments on the role of women in his society, personal freedom and responsibility and the resonance these issues continue to have in the contemporary world were overshadowed by the individuals’ stories.</p> <p>There was a general lack of subtlety in the directorial approach - Aunt Juju became a stereotypical old lady, the Judge was unnecessarily physically gross at times.</p> <p>The pace was fairly fast but had some variations. The use of the space was good and worked well as part of the overall visual aesthetic of the piece.</p>
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Good	On the whole this was good. Lorna McDevitt as Hedda appeared as a completely unsympathetic, manipulative and cold lost soul. While this portrayal was to the detriment of the overall production (see above) she played the part with conviction. Eileen MacCallum (Aunt Juju) and Simon Roberts (Judge) would have benefited from more sensitive direction

			(see above.) Iain Grieve (Tesman) and Thea (Sarah Chalcraft) were both excellent. John Kazak (Lovborg) seemed uncomfortable at times which detracted from his overall performance.
2.4	Use of Music ¹	Good	Pre-recorded which worked well in the context of the production
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	N/A	No choreography as such – see under direction
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Excellent	Design by Graham McLaren, lighting design by Kai Fischer. This was typical of this company's work - spare, atmospheric and with few props. The use of colour (lighting, leaf carpet and red flowers) was very effective.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Competent	Professionally presented.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Citizens main house – c.60% capacity? 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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¹ 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 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	Fine
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ³	Programmes – these were visually well thought out but difficult to read (print size, colour.)
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	Listings, flyers
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Fine
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?	Seemed appropriate.
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 ⁵	Acknowledged

³ These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

⁴ 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

⁵ 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.