

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
SPECIALIST ADVISER ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Theatre workshop

Title of Event: Adventures in a Bath

Type of Event: performance

Date of Visit: 7 August 2003

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: This production used an unusual set-up of a multiple personality being played by two actors, centred round a bathroom, with one actor remaining in the bath throughout. While this could be said to be imaginative, it was not wholly successful. It seemed to wish to describe the state of mind of a young woman who was experiencing a split personality state- not perhaps an entirely original notion.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The performances were clear and comprehensible. The communication of the meaning of the piece was more problematic- this is commented on below.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

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: The concept of a split personality is a complex and challenging one to portray and make comprehensible in a dramatic structure. I think there needs to be a very robust intellectual logic that governs the relationship between the two aspects or personalities, however one chooses to describe them. The themes were interesting-issues of self-image, bulimia and female sexuality were introduced, but not really explored satisfactorily. The writing lacked signs of craft that would lift the text above mere statement to a level of illumination and revelation. I did not feel that the writing added anything new to my experience or expressed the matter of the play in a way that brought fresh insight. The form chosen-essentially a monologue spoken by two actors was a difficult one to pull off and this play had the feel of an exercise that had been committed to with vigour, but finally lacked inspiration.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	X	
Good		
Excellent		

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The fundamental set-up for the production prevented a great deal of movement or dynamism in the production. By setting the piece in baths, and a bathroom the production set itself a dilemma that was not successfully resolved. Clearly the situation called for a representation or indication of nudity. This could have been dealt with by either actual nudity or artfully masking the actors. The director chose a compromise which I felt did not work, with the actors wearing body-tone two-piece swimwear., and some rather awkward making.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
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: Both performances were of a reasonable standard although the vocal ranges employed were limited-there was rather too strident a tone with not enough variation. This detracted from the presentation. There were a few stumbles on lines but for the most part the text was delivered effectively. For large parts of the production there were video projections behind the performers depicting examples of pollution and popular protest movements. The link between these and the action on stage was not clear, and the actors' speeches had fight for attention with this video material which was a distraction rather than a complement to the live action.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

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: There was no live music in the piece.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: No particular comment
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.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: The design was simple and fairly effective. The costumes, as noted above were problematic.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Technical presentation was fine.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	x	
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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Overall a rather static production. The form was challenging and I felt that it asked too much of the performers and the writing. Essentially a monologue for two performers, this demand an extremely high quality of writing and performance to engage an audience and to get its message across.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	x	
Good		
Excellent		

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?

The nature of the production fitted with the theme of the Degenerate programme

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.

Around half full in the studio theatre. The response at the end was moderate.

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.

A simple programme which gave some information on the company. The jokey tone of the content seemed at odds with the theme and nature of the production.

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.

A clear season-brochure gave appropriate information

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment-good
- location- fair.:Parking is difficult
- external signposting –reasonable, but external visibility could be better
- internal directional signing- fair
- access and provision for disabled people- reasonable
- timing of event- fine

2.5 Customer service

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

Fine

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 company's website.

There was no acknowledgement on the production programme. I was not able to locate a website.

Name: David Taylor
Date: 20 August 2003
Scottish Arts Council Officer