



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: TOSG at Tollcross School, Edinburgh

Title of Event: Coille Na Ceilp

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 25 November 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

The production looked good in design terms. More thought could be given to the movement of the performers and also to how they are placed in relation to general sightlines in halls such as this. The manipulation of set elements could be improved. Music and projection by actors all good.

Name: David Taylor

Date: 7 Dec 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:

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, taking account of the following:

1.	Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
1.1	Vision and imagination	Good	An interesting theme- the environment and man's relation to it. The form was a narrative with live music.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	As a non Gaelic speaker it seemed to me that the audience were following the narrative. Certainly the characterisation seemed to be well established.

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		No Comment, as a non-Gaelic speaker
2.2	Direction	Competent	The direction was fairly straightforward, with little in the way of theatrical “magic”. There were rather too many occasions when the actors were standing in a line speaking their lines with little visual material, or believable interaction between the characters. The scene using the banner depicting the various layers of marine predation was poorly handled with the banner being held below waist height and therefore invisible to most of the audience. There were also too many scenes or portions of scenes, particularly near the beginning of the piece, where the actors were sitting on the stage-again, due to the lack of a seating rake this left much of the audience unsighted.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Competent	The volume and level of “attack” of the actors lacked light and shade and would have benefited from greater modulation. The movement by the actors was slightly forced and self-consciously comic. Donna Morrison coped well with a rather problematic costume.

2.4	Use of Music ¹	Excellent	Live solo singing and clarsach by Kathleen Graham enriched the experience. The singing by the cast was also of a good standard.
2.5	Use of Movement/Choreography	Competent	Not a strong element in the production. Movement was not really used to enhance the experience or to satisfactorily express the non-human elements of the story.
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	The general setting was attractive and created a sense of place and atmosphere. The painted and drawn elements were very well executed and the large scroll or banner was very attractive (though spoiled by poor presentation). The lighting was also good.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	Good sound effects and lighting. The raising of cloths at the back of the stage was a bit haphazard (squint) and lent a bit of an amateurish air to the setting, despite the actual design and creation being of a good quality.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction		The audience participation scenes drew the desired responses- the children seemed attentive. The problem with action taking place low down on the floor led to some children having to stand and stretch to see at times.

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	Adequate- as is usual with schools there is no seating rake and poor black out. Acoustics are also not great.
3.2	Information/interpretive material at venue ³	There was an English synopsis, though I did not see it made available to any of the adults present, some of whom may have been non Gaelic speaking. The style of language of the synopsis was certainly not children-friendly and would not have helped non Gaelic children to access the work. This seems to be illogical and unnecessary.

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

3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	Attractive flier-again in Gaelic only.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/A
3.5	External signage and signposting	N/a
3.6	Internal directional signage	N/a
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Appeared ok in terms of level access. No signing available. The company might consider this which could widen the audience for the work to non-Gales with hearing difficulties.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Fine- felt like about the right length for the audience
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	N/A
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ⁵	Appropriate

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.