



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue:

Title of Event: TOSG Gaelic Theatre Company at Tollcross Primary School,
Edinburgh

Type of Event: (e.g. performance, work-in-progress, open rehearsal etc.)
Performance

Date of Visit: Thursday 25th November 2004; 11am

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.)

Competent

The production of Coille na Ceilp (The Kelp Forest) was competent: A complex and charming story told entirely in Gaelic. However the direction, dramaturgical structure of the play as well as the performances seemed rather routine.

Name: Magdalena Schamberger

Date: 16/12/04

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	Simon Mackenzie's vision of telling a story dealing with environmental concerns in a modern fashion and making it accessible for children by connecting it with a fantasy world was interesting.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Competent	It seemed that the story was told appropriately and clearly through the text - however communication through physical action was barely existent.

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	N/A	Due to the fact that I do not speak or understand any Gaelic, I cannot comment on the quality of the script by Simon Mackenzie.
2.2	Direction	Competent	I assume that CnC was directed by Tosg's Artistic Director Simon Mackenzie. The visual beginning of the show was promising, however the rest of the production did not live up to this: In my opinion the staging was routine and the characters were quite one-dimensional. The production lacked physical movement by the actors as well as any high's and low's to support the dramatic structure of the play.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Competent	The performances by Aonghas Lambkin, Carina Macleod, Donna Morrison and David Walker were competent. Their characterisations of the individual characters were quite clichéd and lacked character development throughout the play. When performers were playing multiple characters there was not a lot of differentiation between those characters: although costumes and voices changed there seemed no difference in facial or physical expression.

2.4	Use of Music ¹	Good	The quality of the live harp music performed and sung by Kathleen Graham, as well as the cast, was good and very suitable for the production. In my opinion this was truly the ingredient of the production that helped frame and move the story along.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	Poor	The Choreography by Frank McConnell including the dance of the mermaid and the jellyfish dance was poor: It was neither particularly interesting nor well executed.
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	The props built by Trish Kenny were imaginative: Pleasant colours and good quality. The costumes by Donna Macleod, as well as the set, designed and built by Allan Ross, were suitable for the performance and the touring element of the production. The lighting design was simple but effective.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Competent	The technical standards were competent: No technical problems and lighting, as well as sound effects, were appropriate.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	An estimated 120 children, their teachers and a handful of parents made up the audience. The children seemed to enjoy the show and appeared focused throughout most of the performance, although the attention seemed to slightly drop after the opening sequence.

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	Yes.

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

3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ³	There was no display as the venue of this performance was a school. However a programme describing the individual scenes in English was available for audience members unacquainted with the Gaelic language.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	I was not aware of any.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	N/A I had been sent a complimentary ticket by the company in advance.
3.5	External signage and signposting	Fine.
3.6	Internal directional signage	N/A
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Yes.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Starting time was 11am and the performance finished at 12:05pm. No interval. Appropriate length for a school performance.
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	The Scottish Arts Council Logo was clearly displayed on the flyers as well as the programme. The Tosg website was not advertised.

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.