

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Theatre Espace at TRAMWAY
Title of Event: Domestic Affairs II
Type of Event: performance
Date of Visit: 17 May 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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

This was a highly imaginative visual theatre piece incorporating a wide range of techniques, including film projection and puppetry, performed by one woman. This is part two of what may become a trilogy, but not having seen the first part (a site-specific work in the Netherlands in 2001) was no disadvantage – this piece worked in its own right. My only criticism would be that, as the piece progressed, the theatrical devices began to feel over-used and gimmicky.

1.2 Clarity of Communication.

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

The various theatrical techniques provided a pace and intensity to what was a series of scenes/vignettes. It felt like a collection of experiences or memories, rather than a linear story, but this was clearly intentional.

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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

This was non-linear physical/visual theatre, punctuated by text, some of which was abstract and some poetic. Although in no way reliant on script in the conventional sense, there was a clear story which was effectively conveyed – an exploration of an abandoned house and belongings and the question, “what might have happened here?”

1.4 Direction

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Tight direction of a fast-paced piece, with good use of a range of theatrical and performance techniques.

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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

An impressive solo performance requiring physical stamina and proficiency in movement, speech/vocal work and puppetry. She carried us easily between timeframes and characters.

1.6 Use of music – 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 part, and what effect this had on the quality of the production.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	✓	

The musical soundtrack/score was a key element. It helped to create different moods and scenes. It was recorded to a high standard and entirely appropriate to the overall production.

1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Like music, movement was an integral part of the piece. It was central to communicating the story, effectively linking film projection with live action. The performer was equally adept in using full body movement, as she was with shadow and conventional puppetry.

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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

Impressive use of film projection and shadow puppetry to create sets. Simple but effective costume.

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:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
Excellent	✓	

Given the range of media and reliance on one performer, this was a technically demanding production and extremely well presented.

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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating:
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	✓	
Excellent		

1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?

This was a quality production in line with Tramway’s international performance programming. The response was enthusiastic.

1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.

For a piece of this calibre, the size of the audience (about 50 people?) was very poor.

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)

Poor – the programme was slight, with no information about the company, performer or creative team. No internal or external displays – you wouldn’t know the show was on unless you picked up the season brochure and looked for it.

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.*

Poor – a clear entry in the season brochure is not enough, as evidenced by the small audience.

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment – Poor. I had considerable difficulty getting through to the box office, and when I did, the operator had problems finding the show on the system.
- location of venue – good. Although not central, Tramway is relatively easier to get to.
- external signposting – competent. Tramway would benefit from clearer external signage.
- internal directional signing – competent. Signage is evident, but not obvious. Tramway would benefit from clearer internal signage.
- access and provision for disabled people – competent. Again, like signage, it is there but could be more evident.
- timing of event – good.

2.5 Customer service

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

Competent – front of house staff were friendly and helpful. As noted, box office staff had some difficulties.

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

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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.

The Scottish Arts Council is acknowledged in the season brochure and on the website, but there was no evidence on the programmes.

Name: Cindy Sughrue
Date: 25/05/03
Scottish Arts Council Officer