

**THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Organisation/Venue: Grey Coast Theatre Company
Traverse Theatre

Title of Event: 51 Pegasus

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 14 September 2002

1. Artistic Assessment

1.1 Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event - its Vision and Imagination; Ability to Communicate and Quality of Production.

A fairly straightforward production of a new play by Ian McDonough, a writer new to drama. Directed by Tom Magill. The piece dealt with a dilemma that I would guess is relevant to young men living in Highland villages: whether to stay or move to the city/abroad. This is overlaid by what becomes a slightly preposterous series of revelations about the characters; paternity and hence their inter-relationships.

1.2 You are also asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the event with specific reference to the following:

- **Script (particularly in relation to new work, or second productions)**

The script is strongest in its “crack”, especially in the mouth of the character Trouble. The plotting is rather heavy-handed and ultimately not really believable. It would have been enough to tackle one or two of the issues in one play, but one had the sense that the playwright attempted to cram too much into this, his first play. However, there was a fairly clear story, albeit overwrought, which seemed to take the audience along with it. The image that gave rise to the title was rather laboured and did not achieve the lyricism that is required to make such a central conceit work.

- **Direction**

The direction was adequate but not particularly inspiring. I was confused about the use of the doorway – where did it lead to, and why was it there?

- **Standard of performers**

On the whole, I thought the performances were good, but the leading man, although a good actor, did not seem to inhabit the part fully and this was a significant weakness. I thought both the women’s parts were well played.

- **Design**

The set was not wholly clear in terms of how the various elements tied together. The semi-circle of nets and floats seemed a little lame. The fish boxes looked brand new and could have done with breaking down to add a sense of authenticity.

- **Technical Standards**

Acceptable

- **Appropriateness of production for the audience**

Seen in Edinburgh , and I suppose it would have had greater relevance to a Highland audience.

- **Approximate size of audience and reaction**

There was a good house – about half to two thirds full and the audience was attentive throughout. The response was fairly warm and enthusiastic.

- **Overall Production**

Overall, this was a reasonable, if uninspiring production. The script would have benefited from some dramaturgical work. There were interesting elements in the play but on the whole it was rather over-blown.

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.

2.2 Suitability of the venue for the event:

Good

2.3 Information/Interpretative material provided at the venue (eg programmes, displays) - range, quantity and clarity

Acceptable

2.4 Publicity/Pre-Publicity for the event (leaflets/posters, etc) - range, content and when and where available

N/A

2.5 Accessibility of the venue:

- **ease of payment** Good
- **location** Good
- **direction** Good
- **access for disabled people** Good
- **timing of event** Good

2.6 Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (eg box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)

Good

3. Background to your visit

3.1 Have you seen the work of this artist/company before? YES

3.2 Is this your first visit to this venue? NO