

**THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL**  
**ARTISTIC EVALUATION - DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** 7:84 at the Traverse

**Title of Event:** Gilt

**Type of Event:** performance

**Date of Visit:** 14/10/2003

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: The idea of getting three playwrights to work on one play, with dramaturgy and direction from another playwright is interesting. (This poses practical problems of how the production will actually work.) The theme of money and different people's relationships to it in contemporary society seemed appropriately political (in a broad sense) for this company. However, there was no strong vision behind the piece which lacked cohesion.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

**1.2 Clarity of Communication.**

Rating for this section <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: The interwoven stories of the characters onstage were clearly communicated, but it was unclear what the play as a whole was trying to communicate. There was a lack of emotional or intellectual depth to it, which was perhaps largely due to the script (see below)
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
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 (Please tick)		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> The playwrights - Isabel Wright, Stephen Greenhorn and Rona Munro and dramaturg Zinnie Harris all have good reputations.  The interweaving stories were neatly done but the script was "bitty." There was absolutely nothing in it that demonstrated that three writers and a dramaturg had worked on it. There was no emotional impact within the individual stories or play as a whole. Neither was there anything to engage with intellectually.  The script was very much less than the sum of its (creative) parts.
Very Poor		
Poor	<b>X</b>	
Competent		
Good		
Excellent		

**1.4 Direction**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Directed by Zinnie Harris. There was obvious effort to breathe life into the piece, with good physical use of the set which helped to ensure smooth transitions between different scenes and different storylines. The use of humour (largely through Isabelle Joss's character) provided some good changes of mood. To some extent she was successful – but I feel the skill in direction was let down by the script (see above.)
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good	<b>X</b>	
Excellent		

**1.5 Standard of performers- where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Competent ensemble playing, with all the actors appearing to work very hard. In some cases, for example Andy Gray, this obvious effort detracted from the overall performance. He did not seem at all comfortable with his role and perhaps because of this was not convincing in it. Isabelle Joss, who admittedly had the best part, gave a very convincing performance with the right amount of humour and desperation. Neil Mckinven and Paul Blair did their best but both suffered from some truly appalling and clichéd dialogue.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

**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: Pippa Murphy. Appropriate for the production.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

**1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography**

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: No choreography as such. See under direction.
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: Set by Evelyn Barbour set which was suitably versatile given the various place sit had to represent.  Lighting by Chahine Yavoyran which was adequate and at times good (e.g. during the fire scene.) There was an extremely strange lighting state at the end of the piece where Isabelle Joss walked into her light – it was unclear if this was a design choice, technical/actor error. It stood out so much because of where it came in the play.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: Of an acceptable standard – no obvious problems (except see above.)
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
Good		
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 <i>(Please tick)</i>		Comments and key reasons for rating: This was disappointing, especially given the creative personnel involved in the script. The production was dull and uninspired despite the obvious resources that had been put into it.  This was a collection of storylines which entertained mildly but did not engage in any other way – including politically, which is a key aim for this company.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent	<b>X</b>	
Good		
Excellent		

**1.11 Was the performance appropriate for the audience?**

Yes - in that there was a capacity audience. No – in that it didn't meet the company's aims (see above.)

**1.12 Estimated size of audience and reaction to the production.**

Sold out in Traverse 1. Lots of nervous laughter every time there was a swear word (which was often) and when the condom was put over the fire alarm. Reasonable if not ecstatic reaction.

## 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.  
Free programmes, acceptable quality, with interesting director's notes.  
Posters displayed.

### 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.

Flyers – acceptable design standard, image was appropriate to production.

### 2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment N/A - invited
- location Fine
- external signposting Fine
- internal directional signing Fine
- access and provision for disabled people Fine
- timing of event Fine

### 2.5 Customer service

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

As ever at the Traverse, friendly and efficient.

**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.

NB I checked the website on 14<sup>th</sup> October and was unable to find Gilt tour details. The production opened last week. SAC logo is on website.

Programme acknowledged "National Lottery", but no acknowledgement of **SAC** lottery, no SAC logo.

**Name: Jaine Lumsden**

**Date: 18/11/2003**

**Advisor**

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*(Please tick above as appropriate)*