

**THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL  
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Organisation/Venue:** 7:84 Theatre Company/Tron Theatre

**Title of Event:** The Cave Dwellers

**Type of Event:** Performance

**Date of Visit:** 20.3.02

**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 production that attempted to address contemporary issues with universal applications. The result was disappointingly uneven, and failed to engage fully.

**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 was hampered by an ill-advised attempt to represent a supposed language barrier through the use of a stilted form of English. This contrasted markedly with the easy flow of the interrogatee's naturalistic speeches which were skilfully constructed. His final lyrical passages were the highlight of the piece. Regrettably these did not compensate for the staccato, dis-jointed language of the bulk of the play which made up the inter-active scenes between three of the characters. I thought that the structure was, interesting, with characters speaking the same lines overlapping. The plot lines started apart and gradually converged to a satisfying finish.

Joseph's monologue speeches painted vivid word pictures which had the germs of a really good radio play.

- **Direction**

The direction was generally jerky and unsatisfying. The monologues were well presented, but the scenes involving the other characters were awkward, and poorly paced.

- **Standard of performers**

Liam Brennan's performance was eminently watchable and was the most positive aspect of the production. He was a believable character with a palpable history. The other performances were adequate, but one did not have the sense that the actors understood or believed in who they were portraying.

The movements of the three characters in the cave seemed unnatural and unconvincing. There was little real sense of menace and mistrust or danger.

- **Design**

The set was fairly neutral. The element that worked best was the suggested cave paintings that took on their significance at the appropriate point in the piece. The water-feature was under-stated and, therefore, lacked impact. Costumes were fine. The lighting was unremarkable. The set did not actually succeed in creating the sense of the characters actually being in a cave.

- **Technical Standards**

Technically well presented.

- **Appropriateness of production for the audience**

Altogether this production failed to stimulate. One could see glimmers of understanding and enlightenment in the script, but the use of language seemed to ultimately stifle this. It was a fairly dull evening, enlivened only by Liam Brennan's performance.

In principle, it was the type of production that one would expect to suit the Tron.

- **Approximate size of audience and reaction**

The house was only around quarter full (if that). The response was muted and any comments I overheard were not positive. There were one or two audience members who whooped at the end, but I feel that was unrepresentative.

- **Overall Production**

Overall I do not think that this production would engage audiences particularly. There was little sense of excitement in the production and the whole experience felt rather worthy and flat.

## **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:**

General service at the Tron was good.

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

The programme was well-produced and informative. The quality of publicity material was good.

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

### **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**