



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

**Organisation/Venue:** THE TRON

**Title of Event:** ALADDIE

**Type of Event:** PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

**Date of Visit:** 31.12.04

**Overall Rating** EXCELLENT

This was my first visit to the Tron Christmas show. This team of Forbes Masson and Gordon Dougall are in their fourth year here and it shows. This was a superb use of the traditional pantomime devices (baddie, dame, daft lead, comedy songs) but by judicious scripting and tight direction there was a contemporary feel to the production. The show did not rely on scenic devices but on sharp dialogue and brisk pace. Set unmistakably in the East End of Glasgow the plot developed a very funny parody of reality TV revolving around a magic mobile phone. On the afternoon I went one of the actors was indisposed but the show went on – with the director standing in.

This community orientated, small cast, economical production was witty, raucous, and a packed house enthusiastically embraced it.

**Name:** JON POPE

**Date:** \_08/01/05\_\_\_\_\_

**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	EXCELLENT	The Tron needs to be commended on this production. By allowing this team to develop over time they have come up with a really excellent show. There is considerable expertise required in the production of musical theatre as it is a demanding medium.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	EXCELLENT	The lighting, sound, songs and sightlines were all clear and without distortion or interference.

## 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	EXCELLENT	It was a pleasure to have a script by Forbes Masson that was rude without being salacious. It was saucy but entirely suitable for some of the younger kids in the audience. The contemporary references also ensured that it was not too tame for teenagers. The female lead character was called Lorna Sausage !
2.2	Direction	EXCELLENT	To rely on pace to supersede spectacle you need very good direction and Gordon Dougall had achieved that. His appearance as a understudy was suitably daft and the response of the other actors to the situation indicated it was a tight ship.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	EXCELLENT	Once again it was clear that continuity had allowed George Drennan to blossom as the baddie – Rab Anazer. Andy Clark was a great lead – involving the kids with traditional call and response routines but not falling back on lame grotesquerie.
2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	EXCELLENT	The live music and songs were funny and clear. It was good to see Musical Director, Davey Anderson and fellow musician, Bob Brown, dressed as elves at the side of the stage. There was good underscoring throughout and it never drowned the actors.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	GOOD	The dancing was suitably daft and all the other sequences choreographed by Linda Payne were well thought through and achieved. The sequence of mind exchange via colanders was terrific.
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	GOOD	The design by Vicki Cowan-Ostensen was ingenious and economical given the spacial limitations of the Tron. Bu the costumes were not as good. Rab Anazers cape was not properly backed – which looked tacky – and his suit was poorly finished.
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	EXCELLENT	The show moved along without a hitch. The lighting – by Paul Sorley – was particularly impressive. It allowed the economical design not to seem dwarfed. The video sequences were suitably lo-tech but at the same time indicated that time and effort had been spent getting this effect.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	EXCELLENT	The theatre was full and the audience, of all ages, absolutely loved it. I took a 4 yr old – it was his first experience of live theatre, a 6 yr old and a teenager. They all came away having had a really enjoyable time.

### 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	Debateable. The lack of wing space certainly doesn't make putting on a show of this nature a simple exercise. But perhaps these limitations have ensured that the show is plot driven.
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	There was an excellent free programme. It was colourful and informative. The foyer had a good display and a selection of reviews.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Once again, another venue does not put a show diary on the web. For those of us who have to travel it is a vital tool in selecting our entertainment.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Luckily, the excellent box office staff were able to help and spent some time getting me four seats together – suitable for younger children.

<sup>2</sup> Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule

<sup>3</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

<sup>4</sup> 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

3.5	External signage and signposting	GOOD – the Tron seems to be almost permanently surrounded by scaffolding. Perhaps, one day, it will permanently emerge.
3.6	Internal directional signage	POOR. The issue of the toilets is odd. Both male and female have to go in the same door and then separate. It is both confusing and a logistical nightmare with young people.
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	GOOD. There were no disabled members of the audience but I feel confident they would be treated with equality.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The timing of the interval was expert. A 1.30pm matinee was ideal for those of us taking younger children and having to travel.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	VERY GOOD. The FOH staff were helpful and observant. They were also considerate for those of us trawling small children.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	The SAC logo was not present on the programme. But the web site clearly acknowledges subsidy from the Scottish Arts Council.

---

<sup>5</sup> 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.