



Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue:** A Tron Theatre Company and Reeling&Writhing (R&W) co-production at the Tron Theatre.

**Title of Event:** Standing Wave (SW)

**Type of Event:** (*e.g. performance, work-in-progress, open rehearsal etc.*) Performance

**Date of Visit:** Saturday 23rd October 2004 at 8 pm

**Overall Rating** (Please rate the production overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses.)

Excellent

This co-production between the Tron Theatre Company and Reeling&Writhing about the composer Delia Derbyshire's (DD) life paints a portrait of DD as an artist and a complex human being and offers an intriguing insight into her state of mind. An excellent script, a very good cast and high quality music (both during and after the show - as well downloads available from the website) made for an interesting production.

**Name:** Magdalena Schamberger

**Date:** 21/11/2004

**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	Following a process of research and workshops before starting the production (as described in the programme notes) the company was able to utilise some of DD's own methods to develop this portrait. SW is the outcome of a collaborative process by an excellent creative team. The result, in regards to script, music, direction as well as acting, is a multi-layered production, which successfully communicates the story behind the woman who created the Dr Who theme tune - without ever relying on this fact.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Good	Good and clear.

## 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	A multi layered, non-linear and interesting script by Nicola McCartney (NM) using two 'Delias' and 'The Man' "who represents the real and fictional men in Delia's life" (programme note). NM uses time travel as an effective vehicle to switch between the different characters and time line.
2.2	Direction	Good	Good direction by Nicola Morley in regards to script, actors and incorporation of music. I assume that the creative input by Tim Nunn as Project Artistic Director will have contributed to the realisation of the project.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Good	Both actresses portraying Delia Derbyshire at different times in her life, Abigail Davies and Luisa Prosser, were convincing. Gary McInness was competent as 'The Man' (as well as various male characters). However I was at times slightly confused as to which male character Gary McInness was portraying at any given time.

2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	Excellent	<p>The original recorded music by Pippa Murphy (PM) contributed depth and insight to the portrayal of DD. PM created a suitable and atmospheric sound scape which supported the production as well as layering it with sound bites such as the first landing on the moon, a Martin Luther King speech, etc., effectively establishing and supporting the time line in the play. In her own music, DD “ took sounds and reversed them, slowed them down, sped them up, distorted, copied, layered and repeated them” (programme note). PM’s music appears inspired by this and seems a reflection of this process. Sound Mastering by Kenny MacLeod was of very high quality.</p> <p>As part of R&amp;W’s promise of “ Theatre with music during, after and on the net” (note on leaflet), the programme of SW included a CD with music by PM (from her work on SW as well as other pieces) as well as new commissions by Alistair MacDonald, Nick Fells, Zoe Irvine, Drew Mulholland, Pete Stollery and Pete Dowling. One track is one piece submitted to the company by Melanie Wilson for download from the website. In my opinion the commissioned music (e.g. By Zoe Irvine) and Melanie Wilson’s submission were particularly interesting.</p> <p>There was a promise of further music to be made available as downloads from the website which the company has kept.</p>
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	N/A	
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	<p>The Set Design by Moley Campbell was interesting: creating a BBC studio as well as other locations. However the use of the set (revolving stairs) became slightly repetitive.</p> <p>The costume design seemed minimalistic. However Karen Toal as Wardrobe Supervisor created suitably simple ‘period’ costumes and effective continuity between the two Delia’s. The Lighting Design by Malcolm Rogan was good.</p>

<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.

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

2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	The technical standards accommodated the complex structure of the piece well.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Good	Approximately 130 audience members. The production seemed very appropriate for the attending audience at the Tron Theatre. During the performance the audience seemed attentive and gave warm applause at the end;

### 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	Very suitable
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	A prominent display of regular and outsized posters, leaflets and several production photographs was mounted in the box office as well as in the foyer of the theatre. Copies of previews and reviews were displayed in the box office area. Due to the amount of information not all of it was easily accessible. The Tron Theatre brochure as well as leaflets were available at the box office. Programmes were available inside the theatre.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Previews in 'The List', Big Issue, Sunday Times and The Scotsman. Reviews in The Herald, The Guardian, The Metro and The Times. The reviews and other relevant information as well as musical downloads are available from the company's website. The website is easy to use, the quality of information is comprehensive and easily accessible and in line with the overall marketing concept of the production.

<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

3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Very easy: Staff was extremely helpful and professional.
3.5	External signage and signposting	Good.
3.6	Internal directional signage	Good.
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Good.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The starting time of 8pm and the performance length of 1 hour 45 minutes without an interval were very suitable for both audience and production. However as I had not been made aware in advance of the fact that there would be music in the theatre foyer after the performance, I was unable to stay for this part of the evening.
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Box office staff, front of house and bar staff were professional and friendly.
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	The Scottish Arts Council Logo was clearly displayed on all published materials (posters, leaflets and programme) as well as the company's website

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<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.