

# THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL

## Assessment Report

Organisation/venue: Visible Fictions at the Traverse  
Title of event: The Pearl by John Steinbeck, adapted by Visible Fictions  
Type of event: performance  
Date of visit: 16/02/2002

### 1. Artistic assessment

Please evaluate the **artistic quality** of the event - its vision and imagination; ability to communicate; and quality of production.

The production's apparent simplicity mirrored the same quality in the original.

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)

This represented the original story faithfully. Any ambiguity regarding what the story is meant to portray is also present in Steinbeck's novella.

#### **Direction**

Directed by Douglas Irvine Movement by Liz Ranken

Effective choreography by Liz Ranken transformed what was a good production into something slightly special. It takes a certain type of skill to choreograph for non-dancers, and Liz Ranken did this perfectly. The movement sequences when the cast was using round mirrors to represent the sea and also when using bamboo sticks to represent mountain climbing were especially effective. The use of stage space in every aspect was assured – especially when the cast was performing group scenes e.g. when they were playing the pearl buyers.

#### **Standard of Performers**

Good ensemble playing, with each performer playing multiple parts.

#### **Design**

A deceptively simple set by Mark Leese. Basically a slanting circle that the performers acted on/around/behind. The mirrors and sticks (see direction) were especially effective.

The one jarring element was the projection of the title onto the back wall – this served no purpose and struck a very old-fashioned note in what was otherwise an extremely well designed production.

## **Technical Standards**

Fine.

## **Overall Production**

High quality theatre. The overall effect was slightly depressing, but this is a reflection on the story not the production.

## **Appropriateness of production for the audience**

Seemed appropriate.

## **Approximate size of audience and reaction to the programme of work**

Traverse 2. Fewer children present than I would have expected. Good reaction.

## **2. Management of event**

- 2.1 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:**

Fine

- 2.3 **Information/interpretative material provided at the venue (e.g. programmes, displays etc.**

range, quantity and clarity.

Posters, flyers

- 2.4 **Publicity/pre publicity for the event (leaflets, posters, etc.):**

range, content and when and where available.

Flyer with a striking black and white main image.

### **2.5 Accessibility of the venue:**

Ease of payment Fine

Location Fine

Direction ?

Access for disabled people Lift

Timing of event. Fine

### **Customer service:**

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

Friendly and efficient.

## **3. Background to your visit**

- 3.1 Have you seen the work of this artist/company before? No
- 3.2 Is this your first visit to this venue? No