

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

**Organisation/Venue:**           **Visible Fictions at the Tron**

**Title of Event:**               **Emily's House**

**Type of Event:**               **Theatre Performance**

**Date of Visit:**               **1<sup>st</sup> May 2004**

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.**

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> A strong and coherent vision for the piece was present. <b>Emily's House</b> is an atmospheric piece of children's theatre written by Isabel Wright exploring the themes of loss, grief and change in the lives of children. A touching and cogent theatrical experience. A company of three actors moved between the four characters (two children and two adults) and the narrator. Kate Brailsford directed.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

**1.2 Clarity of Communication.**

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> The play communicated the atmosphere of an old and creaky house as the setting for the action. The action was concerned with change and letting go of an old way of living and moving into a new way. The dynamic between characters was sparse and basic, characters simply drawn without much meat or flesh. The house was presented as the strongest character. A strong atmosphere was created despite the piece seeming to be quite slight.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
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).

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Seemed initially lost; it took a while for the action to start to mean anything. The scene was set quite quickly as to who was who, and how they were related, and things took a while to warm up in regarding the sense of relationship between people. This did not affect the way the creative team managed to create a strong and palpable tension. Apart from this initial slowness, the script was sparse and told the story well. It handled the issues with clarity, if it seemed a bit underwritten. The story drew out very well the destructive motives created by “Gill’s “ denial of her father’s possible return.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

**1.4 Direction**

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> At time the pace seemed slow and awkward, but then at others it picked up and become very strong.  Generally very strong on atmosphere and the direction worked very well to create some good “jump out of your skin” moments.  The use of repetitive and styled movements contributed to the creation of a tight atmosphere, and generally there was good team-work by the company, and strong sense of ensemble playing.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

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

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Well focused and worked well as a team. The script was sparse and the actors worked well to develop some characters out of little context.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
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.

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Very well used to create a fearful landscape, and connected well the sound effects created by the performers.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
<b>Excellent</b>		

**1.7 Use of Movement or Choreography**

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> Performers used stylised action to reinforce parts of the house's character/noises etc., and the ambiguity of the piece, which added distinction to the whole. The ideas within the movement and direction challenged the audience to think harder. A good thing.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
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.

<b>Rating for this section</b> <i>(Please tick)</i>		<b>Comments and key reasons for rating:</b> A very simple, and well co-ordinated piece of design. Nicely judged for age of audience, without being "childish". Lighting design also good and used to nice effect to reinforce character of house and change of mood.
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
Good		
<b>Excellent</b>		

**1.9 Technical Standards** – please comment on whether the production was professionally presented from a technical point of view.

Rating for this section (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: Good
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
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 (Please tick)		Comments and key reasons for rating: This was an interesting piece of theatre, performed to a good and highly professional standard. I would have liked more of it! The play would have handled ten more minutes easily as would have the audience!
Very Poor		
Poor		
Competent		
<b>Good</b>		
Excellent		

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

**Yes**

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

**The Tron was three-quarters full, mostly with children.**

**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.  
**Programme was well presented. Information clear, large posters in foyer.**

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.  
**Have seen several sites where posters have been displayed, also would have been able to pick up leaflets from several sites.**

2.4 Accessibility of the venue

- ease of payment **good**
- location **city centre Glasgow**
- external signposting **good**
- internal directional signing **ok**
- access and provision for disabled people **good**
- timing of event **good for sat morning children's performance**

2.5 Customer service

- quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering).  
**Good. Bar staff very helpful, but a bit overwhelmed and understaffed at a peak time before the performance when a lot of people wanted service.**

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.

**The SAC and SAC lottery logos were printed on the programme and posters in a prominent way.**

**Visible Fictions delivered a performance of a high professional standard that reflects the overall aims and objectives of SAC in relation to its policy of funding theatre for young people and children.**

**Name: Sally Hobson**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004**

**Advisor      X      Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*(Please tick above as appropriate)*