



Scottish Arts Council

ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA

Organisation/Venue:	Visible Fictions at the Tron Theatre
Title of Event:	Shopping For Shoes
Type of event:	Performance
Date of Visit:	10 May 2005

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

A great night's entertainment from a one woman show that produced a range of fabulous characters and dilemmas.

Name: Angela Hogg

Date: 30 June 2005

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	A highly unusual and accessible piece of theatre that would appeal to all ages. This work also ties in with Visible Fiction's aim of deliberately targeting non theatre attenders. The story and approach to theatre making provided a culturally relevant night out to young people (as well as family audiences) that, in my view, has huge scope to bring first time audiences back.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Excellent	This show communicated extremely well with the audience which consisted of teenagers and older people. The responses from all ages at various bits demonstrated that the show had something of relevance to everyone. The dialogue and action was very straightforward and easy to follow. An informal preamble, where the actress sets up a dialogue with the audience, provided an effective device in bringing them on board before the story begins. Claire Knight was a great choice as actress for this piece given her strong ability to make a good connection with the audience.

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	The audience loved the script which was clear, extremely witty, funny and moving in bits. There were so many cultural references of appeal to young people (and older people). The storyline was extremely authentic in the way it dealt with young relationships and family relationships. I also liked the way it looked at the issue of people being like "sheep" in their adoption of eg a designer label culture.
2.2	Direction	Excellent	<p>I believe that part of Dougie Irvine's success in creating work for young audiences is tied in with an unpretentious approach to theatre making, as well as an understanding of the target audience.</p> <p>This shone through in his choice of actress and his risky artistic decision in how the piece would be presented. In some respects you could say that she presented like a stand up comedienne/storyteller. While producing a great carrot for non attenders I believe this could have switched off regular theatre goers. However the depth of script and clever staging, as well as Claire Knight's superb characterisations, won everyone around and the result was a meaningful and extremely enjoyable night out at the theatre for a range of people from different</p>

			backgrounds. The use of large shoe boxes to hold and uncover various shoe characters etc was a great idea and extremely well planned and delivered. The scenarios using shoes as characters were very clever and entertaining. I loved the box with the legs of a cyclist – adding a puppetry dimension to the piece. The turd on the head and the slow motion moon landing provided hilarious moments. There were also some touching moments including the image of shoes dangling together depicting a happy ever after ending.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	Excellent	A very clear and communicative performance. Claire Knight's range of skills in characterisation, physical theatre, expression, gesture, good comic timing and general stage presence combined with an appealing, energetic and down to earth presentation to win the audience over.
2.4	Use of Music ¹	Good	The background music and sound effects were often vibrant , lively and exciting and provided a good backdrop to scenes. Some of it was current and relevent to young audiences. The 2001 Space Odyssey piece was a treat.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	Good	As outlined physical theatre elements were well delivered.
2.6	Design ² – including set, costume and lighting design	Good	<p>Given that both genders were expressed through one actor her clothes were suitably non gender specific.</p> <p>The set was simple and mainly consisted of a range of large cardboard boxes depicting shoe boxes which subsequently supported various mini scenes. A lot of stacking and re-arranging of the boxes took place during the show and I was impressed at how the actor always managed to open the right box at the right time. The lighting was very effective.</p>
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	Good	Technical aspects supported the production well.

¹ 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 Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule

2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction	Excellent	The bottom section of the theatre was full. The response was extremely enthusiastic. A row of teenage girls in front of me were in hysterics at some points showing that certain scenarios really meant something to them. A similar reaction happened at other points from an elderly lady seated beside me.
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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	Suitable.
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ³	There was a lot of publicity material (leaflets/prominent display) at the Tron. The programme was simple and relevantly designed to fit the theme. The leaflet gave background information on the play.
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ⁴	I saw a leaflet and received a letter with additional information.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Good.
3.5	External signage and signposting	Fine.
3.6	Internal directional signage	Fine.
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Fine.
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Timing and length of show was appropriate for the target audience.

³ These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

⁴ 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

3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Good
3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ⁵	The Scottish Arts Council logo on the leaflet and programme (as with other logos) was quite small.

⁵ 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.