

Arts Council/Abbey Theatre Critical Evaluation Report Form (CER)



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	4 May 2013
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<i>Drum Belly by Richard Dormer</i>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Director: Sean Holmes, Set Design: Paul Wills, Costume Design: Eimer Ni Mhaoldomhnaigh, Lighting Design: Paul Keogan, Sound Design: Christopher Shutt, Fight Director: Donal O'Farrell, Assistant Set Designer: Adrian Gee, Assistant Director: Maeve Stone, Voice Director: Andrea Ainsworth
PERFORMERS:	Liam Carney, Gerard Byrne, Ciaran O'Brien, Ronan Leahy, Phelim Drew, Gary Lydon, David Ganly, Declan Conlan, Ryan McParland, Karl Shiels

Please ascribe a value for each criterion below. It is important to keep in mind what the numbers represent in **language**, and not the value of the number itself.

- 1 – Falls below what would generally be regarded as an acceptable standard for professional theatre presentation
- 2 – Achieves an acceptable standard, but not much more in terms of technique, ambition, innovation or quality
- 3 – Is good in terms of overall standard
- 4 – Is very good in terms of standard
- 5 – Is of an excellent standard in the view of the assessor

CRITERION	VALUE
The Abbey's Mission (<i>The Abbey Theatre, as Ireland's national theatre, has a cultural, social and political role in Irish society. Its stated mission is to "to create world-class theatre that actively engages with and reflects Irish society." To what extent does the production deliver on and reflect this role and this mission?</i>)	4
This is a clever and brave piece of programming which works well. A debut Abbey play put straight onto the main stage which takes heavily from Quentin Tarantino and McDonagh. Although it is set in 1960's Brooklyn there are lots of links to contemporary Ireland.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	3

<p>The workshop style is a regular feature of Sean Holmes and Paul Wills and works well here adding to the black humour of the piece. The spare use of furniture and props and stylishly choreographed changes keeps the play moving at a healthy pace. There is still room for extras like the dance scene in the opening bar scene.</p>	
<p>Execution (<i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i>)</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>This was a well made piece of work. Technically good with dramatic lighting & sound. My only issues were with [REDACTED] who lacked the menace and was at times difficult to hear. Putting the 3 heavies in white overalls was a bit soft but I'm sure Wardrobe were pleased.</p>	
<p>Effectiveness (<i>connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i>)</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The Audience were quite quiet but were listening. There were some good one-liners which raised laughs. There wasn't enough menace or enough blood to make it a classic.</p>	
<p>Excellence (<i>the extent to which, in the view of the assessor, the work presented is excellent when compared to best international practice, i.e. the extent to which the work is "world class"</i>)</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>It was a good production and kept my interest throughout.</p>	
<p>Quality of New Writing (in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account)</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>There was some good writing and some good work had been done from the printed script to the stage version. Drum Belly was one of the more interesting characters but he was sparsely used.</p>	
<p>Any other comments:</p>	
<p>The job of a new writing theatre is to give the first outing of a new play the best production it can and I think the Abbey have done this well here. Disappointingly small house for a Saturday matinee.</p>	
<p>Report Completed by:</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p>

Appendix 2: Arts Council/Abbey Theatre Critical Evaluation Report Form (CER)



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	27 April 2013
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<i>Drum Belly by Richard Dormer</i>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Dir Sean Holmes
PERFORMERS:	Liam Carney, Gerard Byrne, Ciaran O'Brien, Ronan Leahy, Phelim Drew, Gary Lydon, David Ganly, Declan Conlon, Ryan Mcparland, Karl Shiels

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CRITERION	VALUE
The Abbey's Mission (<i>The Abbey Theatre, as Ireland's national theatre, has a cultural, social and political role in Irish society. Its stated mission is to "to create world-class theatre that actively engages with and reflects Irish society." To what extent does the production deliver on and reflect this role and this mission?</i>)	4
Please comment briefly on your score here: It was good to see a new play with some ambition to take a new angle on the subject of Irish emigration and Irish violence, and to bring in some new blood, so to speak, in direction, set design and writing The play itself is rather uneven and the direction occasionally wavered in focus and tone, but the performances were uniformly first rate and the impact of the play considerable.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	3

Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>There are many original touches, though the space-exploration 'key' was rather heavily laboured and the determination to present testosterone-fuelled violence as graphically as possible began to pall after a while. The moments of real effectiveness came elsewhere, as in the beautiful silent scene in the diner, with 'Bobby Boy' pouring sugar onto the floor while he listens to 'Baby It's You'. In fact, silence –when it was used- was the most effective way to convey menace, often very powerfully.</p>	
Execution (quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.)	4
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The acting was extremely strong, and the direction made good use of accomplished comedians such as [REDACTED] was a powerful stage presence and [REDACTED] was brilliant as [REDACTED], but the cast was uniformly top-notch.. The sets were effective, economical and intelligently thought out.. The movement between farce and menace was sometimes rather awkwardly handled; the flavour of Joe-Orton-meets-Martin- MacDonagh against a background clearly influenced by 'The Godfather' was not always very convincing, and the rhetoric shift to larger themes (death of the fighting Irish, the final scene in the church) brought in a note of uncertainty. The fault may lie in the play more than the direction: though containing some powerful and suggestive themes, and often brilliantly parodying the tropes of exile/victimhood, it sometimes seemed an unachieved work, which needed more development to become really good.</p>	
Effectiveness (connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression)	3
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>A Saturday matinee was quite well attended, and the graphic violence made its mark with the audience- though the general reaction to the larger themes that were being floated was fairly muted. My own feeling at the end was that it had been entertaining and thought-provoking though not deeply affecting, and that it could have done with some re-writing and re-focussing; but the actors did brilliantly by it, and the rawness and energy were invigorating.</p>	
Excellence (the extent to which, in the view of the assessor, the work presented is excellent when compared to best international practice, i.e. the extent to which the work is "world class")	3
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>I think that this would be an effective contender in, say, an international festival, but perhaps not a major winner, because of the somewhat unresolved nature of the work.</p>	
Quality of New Writing (in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account)	3/4

Please comment briefly on your score here

It is good to see a brand-new play and it certainly had an energy and rawness at certain junctures, as well as shafts of wit. It tried to do something ambitious, and to jostle different genres together in a stimulating and occasionally in-your-face way. I'd like to see a slightly revised and developed production,

Any other comments:

Report Completed by:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Appendix 2: Arts Council/Abbey Theatre Critical Evaluation Report Form (CER)



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	9 th May 2013
PLAY/AUTHOR:	Drumbelly by Richard Dormer
CREATIVE TEAM:	Director Sean Holmes Designer Paul Wills
PERFORMERS:	

Please ascribe a value for each criterion below. It is important to keep in mind what the numbers represent in **language**, and not the value of the number itself.

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CRITERION	VALUE
The Abbey's Mission (<i>The Abbey Theatre, as Ireland's national theatre, has a cultural, social and political role in Irish society. Its stated mission is to "to create world-class theatre that actively engages with and reflects Irish society." To what extent does the production deliver on and reflect this role and this mission?</i>)	4
Please comment briefly on your score here: This play explores the Irish gangster community in America. The production was certainly world class, but I am uncertain how much the play reflects Irish society. It certainly explores the diaspora and engaged with a youngish audience.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	5

Please comment briefly on your score here	
This was a bold play to present on the main stage. It presented the work of a fairly new Irish voice – although [REDACTED] is known as an actor and as a writer of his celebrated one man show. The Abbey should be commended for the risk-taking involved in giving this play a major production	
Execution (<i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i>)	5
Please comment briefly on your score here	
The acting was a of a very high standard and the production was very well-executed	
Effectiveness (<i>connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i>)	4
Please comment briefly on your score here	
The play connected well with a younger audience. I am not sure how much it affected change, for my particular taste I felt it was stronger on style than substance.	
Excellence (<i>the extent to which, in the view of the assessor, the work presented is excellent when compared to best international practice, i.e. the extent to which the work is "world class"</i>)	5
Please comment briefly on your score here	
This work was certainly comparable to the best similar international work	
Quality of New Writing (<i>in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account</i>)	3.5
Please comment briefly on your score here	
This was an ambitious play, but I did feel that it could have benefited from more dramaturgical work before being produced. Where the narrative was strongest around the 5 th scene the play worked best, but somehow the style of piece often allowed it to meander especially in the earlier scenes which showed much but dramatically achieved less.	
Any other comments:	

This was a very positive and welcome production from the Abbey. It took risks and embraced the contemporary whole-heartedly. I have a niggling doubt, however, about effectiveness of the Abbey's literary department when it comes to new work – somehow the process between script and stage does not seem to be as rigorous as perhaps it should be.

Report Completed by:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]