

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	10 th September 2012
PLAY/AUTHOR:	O'Casey
CREATIVE TEAM:	Director Wayne Jordan Set Design: Tom Piper
PERFORMERS:	Joe Hanley, Frankie McCafferty, Deirdre Molloy, Kelly Campbell, Gabrielle Reidy, Barry Ward, Dara Devaney, Roxana Nic Liam, Mark Fitzgerald Gillian McCarthy etc

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>)	1
Please comment briefly on your score here: The acting was generally below a level I would have expected – the Nora was particularly under cast. Bluster replaced truthful emotion, and the production seemed totally dislocated from the imperatives of its period. It was a very long three hours with the set designs and scene changes being almost the only pleasurable relief	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here: The music hall concept was relatively interesting, but the failure to follow-through on the Brechtian alienation device only served to show up its short-comings as a metaphorical frame for the play	
Execution (<i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i>)	2

Please comment briefly on your score here	
The set, costume design and lighting were of a high standard, but every other aspect of the production was disappointing	
Effectiveness (<i>connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i>)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here A two thirds full-house across most adult age groups received the play politely at the curtain-call. Much of the play's comedy failed to raise a laugh. A large party of German students were ticked off by ushers for talking during the first half and left in the interval. The accents must have often been impenetrable for a non-Irish audience. The actors spent much of the play shouting and blustering both vocally and physically and the end result was to under-sell a great classic by a large margin	
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>)	1
Please comment briefly on your score here The acting in this production felt old-fashioned and a world away from modern best practice. It felt like watching a production in a time-warp	
Quality of New Writing (in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account)	
Please comment briefly on your score here Not applicable	
Any other comments:	
A long and wasted night at the theatre which made me question why this play was being revived yet again. O'Casey is what the Abbey should do best, and not what it should just do often. Every theatre has a right to fail, but the stakes for the Abbey are higher if it revives O'Casey (cf the RSC and Shakespeare), and to field a cast so under par in a production so emotionally barren is depressing.	
Report Completed by:	

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



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	11 September 2012
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<i>The Plough and the Stars</i> by Sean o'Casey
CREATIVE TEAM:	Dir: Wayne Jordan, Set Design: Tom Piper, Costume Design: Joan O'Clery, Lighting Design: Sinead McKenna, Composer: Conor Linehan, Sound Design: Ben Delaney, Movement: Sue Mythen, Voice: Andrea Ainsworth
PERFORMERS:	Joe Hanley, Frankie McCafferty, Deidre Molloy, Laurence Kinlan, Kelly Campbell, Gabrielle Reidy, Barry Ward, Dara Devaney, Roxanna Nic Liam, Tony Flynn, Kate Brennan, Karl Quinn, Mark Fitzgerald, Gillian McCarthy, Gavin Fullam, Keith Hanna

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>)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here: A seminal piece of Irish writing given an unexceptional production. It highlights an important moment in Irish history but this production doesn't add much or particularly engaged me.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	2

Please comment briefly on your score here	
Nothing particularly ambitious about the production. A lovely looking set. Very unimaginative sound scape particularly the crowd noises.	
Execution (<i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i>)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
The Music Hall setting, although an interesting idea, had the effect of getting the company to concentrate on the melodrama. In doing so it absolved them of any responsibility for tackling the more complex personal relationships ive the play its colour. I found that the performances seemed to lacked any subtlety or depth. The play is so well crafted by O'Casey that any production should really have the audience in bits by the end and sadly this wasn't the case here. Acting was competent bar a couple of less than convincing cockney accents from the soldiers. Set design was good and the scene changes worked well. It wasn't always convincingly used. Lighting was generally good and although there were footlights they didn't seem to be key to the lighting design which was much cooler.	
Effectiveness (<i>connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i>)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
Half full house were quiet. For such a key play in the Irish Repertoire there were very few young people in the audience.	
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>)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
This Production is competent but not much more. No real attempt has been made to make the production relevant to audiences today and the style of performance is comfortable and slightly old fashioned. I would struggle to agree with the claim made in the Programme that this production looked at the script with fresh eyes.	
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>)	N/A
Please comment briefly on your score here	
Any other comments:	
Performed in the O'Reilly Theatre and there is a distance between the Stage and the Audience which didn't help the atmosphere. Good Credits for both Arts Council	

& Culture Dept in Venue & Programme.

Programme is beautiful but I would have welcomed some more information on the project – Something from members of the design team or why it is important to restage it at the present time. Wayne touched on it in his programme piece but I couldn't quite see the link.

Overall a competent production.

Report Completed by:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	10 September 2012
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<i>The Plough and the Stars by Sean O'casey</i>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Dir Wayne Jordan
PERFORMERS:	Joe Hanley, Frankie McCaferty, deirdre Molloy, Laurence Kinlan, Kelly Campbell, Gabrielle reidy, Barry ward, Dara devaney, Roxanna nic Liam, Tony Flynn, Kate Brennan, Karl Quinn, Mark Fitzgerald, Gillian McCarthy, Gavin Fullam, Keith Hanna

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>)	3
Please comment briefly on your score here: Variably paced, uneven performances, uncertainly directed, but had certain strengths- the vital second act was very well conceived and poerformed, bringing the politics upfront. The last act seemed interminable. But the punch of the play was delivered effectively at its centre point.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	2/3

Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The approach was rather respectful and sometimes indecisive and the pacing odd; the difficult acoustic of the O'Reilly Theatre wasn't overcome. The play is so strongly anchored in the events of the recent past (recent to when it was written) that it is hard to shake it around and take risks; though the decisiveness of the second act, and the expressionist flavour of the staging, showed that a traditional concentration on the immediate politics, if decisively handled, can have considerable dramatic effect. But the overall impression was of a classic, gingerly handled.</p>	
Execution (quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The acting was uneven, and much of the effect undercut by a weak [REDACTED] and a variable [REDACTED], though the small parts of [REDACTED] were admirably handled. Overall, the direction lacked pace and confidence.</p>	
Effectiveness (connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression)	2-3
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>Many of the audience were of school age, and foreigners, and seemed uninvolved, perhaps through ignorance of the background to the play. The rest of the audience connected with it well enough, and the intrinsic power of the drama made its effect. But the general atmosphere was still one of attendance at a great classic, cautiously handled.</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")	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>This was not, by any stretch of the imagination, an exceptional production.</p>	
Quality of New Writing	N/A
Please comment briefly on your score here.	
Any other comments:	
Disappointing	
Report Completed by:	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]