

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE: 14th December 2012

PLAY/AUTHOR: **QUIETLY by Owen McCafferty**

CREATIVE TEAM: Directed by Jimmy Fay Designer Alison Cummins

PERFORMERS: Patrick O'Kane Declan Conlon Robert Zawadzki

*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 (*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?*)

5

Please comment briefly on your score here: A powerful piece of theatre about the aftermath of the conflict in the North of Ireland. Bridging the religious divide the play offers some hope for reconciliation and understanding of the sectarian conflict.

It challenges the audience to engage with a peace process between individuals, and it should be seen widely in Northern Ireland

Ambition (*innovation, risk-taking, originality*)

4

Please comment briefly on your score here This is not the most ambitious play either stylistically or in content, but it is a very effective piece of political theatre

Execution (*quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.*)

5

Please comment briefly on your score here An evocative set. A good production that allows the actors and text to breathe, and three excellent performances.

There were moments when the power and shock of the

performances reduced the auditorium to total tense silence. The pauses in the play held the audiences concentration in a way rarely experienced in the theatre

Effectiveness (*connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression*)

5

Please comment briefly on your score here

Very effective, and certainly you leave the theatre feeling this should be seen by a much wider audience. It would be wonderful to see it toured into the community in the North

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"*)

5

Please comment briefly on your score here

As good a piece of theatre on this subject as you would see anywhere

Quality of New Writing (in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account)

4

Please comment briefly on your score here

A very good script – there were a few moments when the play could have been trimmed a little.

Any other comments: It was great to see a crowded upstairs bar at the Abbey with Live music after the Peacock show – a pity this was not publicised in the Peacock before or after the show

Sad to see the auditorium only about 60% full for one of the final performances of the run. Not the fault of the Abbey, but perhaps it was slightly risky to programme such a difficult political play in the run-up to Christmas.

Report Completed

(Your name
here and
date)

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



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	8 December 2012
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<i>Quietly by Owen McCafferty</i>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Director: Jimmy Fay, Set Design: Alyson Cummins, Costume Design: Catherine Fay, Lighting Design: Sinead McKenna, Sound Design: Philip Stewart, AV Design: Neil O'Driscoll, Voice Director: Andrea Ainsworth
PERFORMERS:	Robert Zawadzki, Patrick O'Kane, Declan Conlon

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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
This new play does reflect well on the mission & role. It's a new play by a writer from Northern Ireland making his debut at the Abbey. The topic is very current. Production values are high with fairly good performances from the small all-male cast.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	3
A new full-length production by a well established writer working at the Abbey for the first time. Nothing particularly innovative in the production but it does tackle a difficult and very contemporary subject, leaving us with a more positive outcome than seems currently fashionable.	
Execution (<i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography,</i>	4

direction, etc.)		
<p>This was a well executed production. Production values were high although the final sound cue was less than convincing. It may have been the matinee but I found the performance slightly flat and the direction hadn't quite solved the problems that remained in the script. The performances were fine but I found the direction uninspired.</p>		
Effectiveness (connection with the audience, engagement & response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression)		3
<p>The audience, the majority seemed to be part of a 'Matinee Club' were intertested throughout the performance. The topic would normally have been very interesting but somehow it lacked enough drama. Respectful applause at the end.</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
<p>This was a competent piece of theatre and works as part of a new writing season. I felt it needed some more work to bring out some of the back stories and smooth some of the rough parts of the plot.</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
<p>This is a good piece of writing tackling powerful themes. I wasn't entirely convinced overall that it was complete. The forgiveness moment arrived too early and wasn't unearned at that point in the script. Pity as it was a key moment in the story.</p>		
Any other comments:		
<p>It is good to see another good Irish writer making their Abbey Debut.</p>		
Report Completed by:	<div style="background-color: black; width: 250px; height: 1.2em; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>	

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



ARN: 02003

ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	8 Dec 2012
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<i>Quietly by Owen McCafferty</i>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Dir Jimmy Fay
PERFORMERS:	Robert Zawadzki, Patrick O'Kane, Declan Conlon

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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 was a powerful, cleverly staged, completely gripping new play which put 'the North' on the stage in a more convincing, elemental and affecting way than most theatre that attempts such a task. It seemed to me to do exactly that the above criterion demands.	
Ambition (<i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i>)	3
Please comment briefly on your score here: In a way, this was a classic three-hander, set in a tightly-bound (but authentic and beautifully conceived) set. It might seem unambitious in its conception, but the quality of the writing, acting and direction lifted the execution into something special.	
Execution (<i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i>)	4

Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The acting was hard to fault: [REDACTED] a notably charismatic, sceptical, dry presence behind the bar, acting as a kind of referee while manipulating his own private life by text (a brilliant piece of theatre). [REDACTED] was utterly convincing and powerful. But [REDACTED] gave as powerful a performance as I have seen in a very long time, full of barely-contained anger, with brilliantly delivered lines and consummate body-language: it was utterly convincing. The set was beautifully done, and the strategy of text messages flashing up on the mirrors behind the bar a marvellous trick. The direction was well paced, tense and authoritative.</p>	
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	
<p>A packed Saturday matinee audience was riveted throughout, and gave a great ovation at the end.</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>)	4
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>This play should succeed anywhere, in this production and with this cast; it is what dramatic confrontation is about. I very much hope it transfers.</p>	
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>)	4
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The writing is stripped-down, suggestive, raw and powerfully implicit for the most part- occasionally veering into overstatement, but the play can carry it. The almost-reconciliation scene, unconvincing when read on the page, but executed with utter conviction by both actors, is one such example.</p>	
Any other comments:	
<p>One of the very best things I have seen at the Abbey, and exactly what the Peacock should be enabling.</p>	
Report Completed by:	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]