

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



ARN: 02003

### ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	7 Dec 2012
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<b><i>The Dead dramatised by Frack McGuinness</i></b>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Dir Joe Dowling
PERFORMERS:	Fiona Bell, Anna Brady, Ingrid Craigie, Lorcan Cranaaitech, Derbhle Crotty, Morgan Crowley, Muiris Crowley, Patrick Kelliher, Pascal Kennedy, Mark Lambert, Rosaleen Linehan, Laura macken, Charlotte McCurry, Alison Mckenna, Jonathan Mitchell, Aileen Mythen, Emma O'Kane, Clare O'Malley, Shane O'reilly, Derry Power, Anita reeves, Stanley Townshend.

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
<b>The Abbey's Mission</b> ( <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:

This dramatisation of the most famous Irish short story, already brilliantly translated to film by John Huston, was an interesting but demanding idea whose execution was not fulfilled with the necessary brio and imagination. Of course, some Joyceans would never be pleased- but even accounting for this, aspects of the translation were distinctly clunky and literal and (after a brilliant opening) the effect was of a rather lacklustre transposition of Joycean dialogue, with a distictly unsuccessful finale. The production was also hampered by bad sets and some lamentable miscasting.

<b>Ambition</b> ( <i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i> )	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The choral opening was beautiful, suggestive, affecting and raised one's hopes high: it seemed to suggest that the story was going to be moved radically into a dramatic sphere, and a great text treated with the necessary radical courage- a quality of which this playwright is well capable. Conor Linehan's music, and the use of Tom Moore's melodies, are effective and sometimes moving. But the play remained too strictly within the confines of the story, notably in the famous -too famous- closing sequence, where the revelatory scene between Gabriel and Gretta was overplayed, and the celebrated last passage of the story intoned as a soliloquy, to distinctly unmoving effect.</p>	
<b>Execution</b> ( <i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i> )	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>The sets were misconceived- a grand austere neo-classical ball-room did not match the implications of the Misses Morkans' house, and was clearly organised with a view of tedious dance scenes, of which there were far too many. The acting was uneven, with a girls' chorus of commentary an unsuccessful and unsubtle idea; the playing of [REDACTED] as a scene-stealing comic double-act, while undeniably funny, introduced a pantomimic note which was sometimes unfortunate. [REDACTED], an excellent actor, was adequate as [REDACTED] but failed to deliver at the end, and [REDACTED], another fine actor, was spectacularly miscast as [REDACTED] matronly, upholstered, and not beguiling enough for the part. The relationship with Gabriel was unsatisfactorily conveyed, an important element in the damp-squib effect of the final scene. Ingrid Craigie was first-rate, but many of the others delivered their lines in a declamatory and oddly unconvincing way. After the opening, the whole thing lost pace and became, at moments, dramatically inert. It was a preview, but much about the production seemed intrinsically unsatisfactory. Sometimes it felt uncomfortably as if one was seeing 'A Christmas Carol' at the Gate. There should have been far more ambition connected with the whole enterprise.</p>	
<b>Effectiveness</b> ( <i>connection with the audience, engagement &amp; response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i> )	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
<p>See my last comments. There was a certain amount of inappropriate laughter, and while the comic turns were much appreciated, the epiphanies experienced by Gabriel did not seem to connect powerfully across the footlights- especially at the end. The person I was sitting beside (a stranger to me) remarked at the end that he felt 'curiously unmoved', which was exactly my feeling.</p>	
<b>Excellence</b> ( <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	
A missed opportunity. A great Irish classic, adapted into a different literary form, needed to reclaim the power and emotion of the original, in a new mode. This strikingly did not happen.	
<b>Quality of New Writing</b> (in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account)	2
Please comment briefly on your score here	
I found the adaptation cautious, rather unwieldy, and –especially where Gabriel's interior thoughts become pieces of dialogue, as where Gretta talks about his mother's dislike of her- often unconvincing.	
<b>Any other comments:</b>	
Overall, a disappointing execution of what might have been an excellent idea. It was played too safe.	
<b>Report Completed by:</b>	<div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></div>

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



ARN: 02003

## ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	17 January 2013
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<b><i>The Dead by James Joyce in a dramatisation by Frank McGuinness</i></b>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Director: Joe Dowling, Set Design: Riccardo Hernandez, Costume Design: Joan Bergin, Lighting Design: Malcolm Rippeth, Composer & Musical Director: Conor Linehan, Sound Design: Ben Delaney, Movement Direction & Choreography: David Bolger, Assistant Director: Maeve Stone, Voice Director: Andrea Ainsworth
PERFORMERS:	Fiona Bell, Anna Brady, Ingrid Cragie, Lorcan Cranitch, Derbhle Crotty, Morgan Crowley, Muiris Crowley, Patrick Kelliher, Pascal Kennedy, Mark Lambert, Rosaleen Linehan, Laura Macken, Charlotte McCurry, Alison McKenna, Jonathan Mitchell, Aileen Mythen, Emma O'Kane, Clare O'Malley, Shane O'Reilly, Derry Power, Anita Reeves, Stanley Conroy

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CRITERION	VALUE
<b>The Abbey's Mission</b> ( <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

This is a modern adaptation of a classic Irish story so it has some resonance and engagement with audiences. It is elegantly made, and while the play is set in the period before 1916, it doesn't have any obvious links to the politics and lives of citizens in Ireland today. As a historical piece it is interesting, but I had hoped that a modern adaptation might reveal some more contemporary insights to a modern audience.	
<b>Ambition</b> ( <i>innovation, risk-taking, originality</i> )	3
This was an interesting but quite effective choice of play to put on over Christmas. The Abbey's Technical team were certainly working at a larger scale and it's a credit to them that the movement of the very large walls flew so smoothly. There was a large cast and the songs and the choreography added an interesting and welcome element to the production.	
<b>Execution</b> ( <i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i> )	3
This was a beautiful production to watch. There was a stylishly choreographed opening, beautiful snow effects and a very simple but elegant set. The Gresham Scene didn't work quite as well and some of the lighting seemed out of place. The play picked up whenever [REDACTED] appeared although [REDACTED] performance seemed bigger than was perhaps originally intended. Sadly I found [REDACTED] quite uncharismatic as [REDACTED] and this wasn't helped by some odd blocking, particularly in the final scene	
<b>Effectiveness</b> ( <i>connection with the audience, engagement &amp; response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i> )	3
I was engaged throughout and the audience – many who were quite elderly - seemed to thoroughly enjoy the performance. The company also dealt well with a distressed member of the audience who was having some respiratory problems during some of the quieter moments.	
<b>Excellence</b> ( <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> )	3
This was an elegant production with many elements that worked well. Overall I found it quite pedestrian and would dearly have liked to see a little more chemistry between [REDACTED]	
<b>Quality of New Writing</b> ( <i>in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account</i> )	3
It is obviously not an original piece, but I enjoyed the writing. There was a lot of dialogue to get through and the Songs & Dance and of course regular appearances by [REDACTED] were used to lighten the cake. Structurally the linear approach didn't help raise any dramatic tension for the final scene, but this may have been down to the performances rather than the writing.	
<b>Any other comments:</b>	
The production was sold out and there was a returns queue. The emergency	

services were called to help a patron who had fallen on the foyer stairs preshow, and there was a further fall in the auditorium before the performance so the FOH staff had an eventful evening!

**Report Completed by:**

[REDACTED]

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



ARN: 02003

### ARTS COUNCIL CRITICAL EVALUATION REPORT – ABBEY THEATRE

DATE:	14 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2013
PLAY/AUTHOR:	<b>Joyce/ Adaptation Frank McGuinness</b>
CREATIVE TEAM:	Director: Joe Dowling
PERFORMERS:	Dearbhla Crotty, Mark Lambert, Stanley Townsend, Ingrid Craigie, Lorcan Cranitch

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Please comment briefly on your score here: This is the third book adaptation in the last nine months of work at the Abbey – it reflects Irish society of a bygone era, and seems to please an unruffled fairly elderly audience	
<b>Ambition</b> (innovation, risk-taking, originality)	1

Please comment briefly on your score here: The adaptation was somewhat clunky, and the production traditional and old-fashioned. The tableaux felt rather like a series of table mats at a fashionable dinner, and only in the final scene did there seem to be much drama. No risks taken here	
<b>Execution</b> ( <i>quality of technique, skill, performance, scenography, direction, etc.</i> )	2.5
Please comment briefly on your score here: This was a good company of some of the most talented Irish actors, however no one was out-standing except possibly [REDACTED]. The story was adequately told. The costumes were good and the design pleasing.	
<b>Effectiveness</b> ( <i>connection with the audience, engagement &amp; response, the extent to which piece affects change and leaves a lasting impression</i> )	2
Please comment briefly on your score here: The house was full, the audience seemed appreciative and attentive although mainly elderly. I would imagine that most felt they had a pleasing Christmas/New Year night out	
<b>Excellence</b> ( <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 :Though good this was not world class theatre	
<b>Quality of New Writing</b> ( <i>in the case of new writing, dramaturgical technique as well as artistic ambition and originality will be taken into account</i> )	1
Please comment briefly on your score here: A very disappointing adaptation – short on innovation or ambition.	
<b>Any other comments:</b>	
[REDACTED]	
<b>Report Completed by:</b>	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]