



A2.2

Performing to a Commission Brief

Summary of Findings
&

Evidence of Tasks

Press Officer

Summary of Findings-Press Officer

Professional Venues:

The Lyric Theatre, Belfast

The Rainbow Factory, Belfast.

From my research of two professional venues I found that the role of Press Officer is a very important position in the organisation. At the Lyric Theatre there is a designated Press Officer, Anne Madden. At Rainbow this role is generally carried out by the director of each production.

Those responsible for contacting the press generally use a standard format for creating press releases. Anne Madden indicated that the important idea was to grab the attention of the journalists, she also said that it will help your chance of being published if you present your material to a format. Each press release should include the following:

For Immediate Release-this should be used to indicate that the event is just about to take place and should be placed at the top left corner.

Headline- this should be snappy and catchy and help to grab the attention of the journalist.

Place, dates and times-these should precede the story to ensure the reader is clear about where and when things are happening.

Body of text-this is where the description of the event is outlined. The format here should be in short paragraphs. The release should ideally be no longer than one page.

Company/organisation-provide background information about the company performing the event.

Contact information-provide contact details-phone number/email address for the Press Officer.

Sponsors-ensure sponsors are mentioned.

Quotations-include a reflection on the production from a key cast member/ director or sponsor.

Word Count-include the word count and finish the release with **ENDS**.

In the creation of my Press Release I followed this advice (refer document 2). Anne also indicated that the release should be sent 3 weeks in advance of the press night.

A form of the press release should also appear on the organisation website.

I also investigated how to go about inviting the media for the press evening performance. I sought professional advice from one of the Directors, Cheryl O' Dwyer, at the Rainbow Factory. She explained that it was important to make personal contact with the journalists responsible for the Arts/Education section of the publications/ media organisations. Cheryl also outlined the publicity policy used by Rainbow which was based on the 21 rule. The idea is to promote the production in 21 ways including communication to as large a pool of journalists as possible. Anne Madden suggested that the invite should include an RSVP and should circulate to print, radio, television and online personalities. I also consulted with our Publicity Officer and used her graphic on the invite with the intention of grabbing the attention of the media.

The best night for press to attend is the opening night. Anne suggested that this night should also be reserved for VIP guests to provide the atmosphere of a special event. The ultimate aim is to ensure the production is reviewed positively by at least some of the press attendees. Evidence of the invite appears in print format in my evidence of tasks (refer document 3). Email invites are also now used extensively and these should include similar information.

The final task within the role of Press Officer was the compilation of a list of press contacts. The advice from the Lyric was to ensure that the local press as well as those at the major publications should form the basis of the list. Cheryl O' Dwyer also indicated that publications with free circulations are an important vehicle for publicising any event.

I have produced a comprehensive list of contacts including journalists with the local media (refer document 1). As a result of the challenging nature of the production, I have also included journalists who deal with issues related to young people.

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Sixth Year Performing Arts students challenge young audiences with a daring presentation of their original production entitled “The Road Not Taken”.

Young Performing Arts students at *** College have created an original drama about the turbulent lives of teenagers today which is to be performed in the *** Community Hall at 8.00pm each evening from May 20th to May 23rd 2015.

The students have created their own production company and have included original dialogue and music to enhance their stunning presentation. Young audience members who have attended the previews have described the performance as “energetic and exciting”, “a performance which made me really think”, “both sad and thrilling at the same time”. The director *** indicated that the strong cast have produced a “masterpiece of human dilemma” a performance which “challenges our preconceptions of teenage life”.

“The Road Not Taken” is a devised production based on the Robert Frost poem of that title. It centres on a young adult who now faces an important choice in her life. Will that choice lead to a positive outcome against all the odds or will the direction from which she has come shape the nature of her future? Will she, like Frost, in the end take the road “less travelled by”?

ABC plays the central role of Laura and brings to the character a real sense of integrity and believability. She presents the vulnerable side of the character with true conviction and the audience, from the start, clearly sense her inner strength and ability to face the chaos that life throws at her. ABC describes her character as “feisty and invincible yet fearful and susceptible; a real mixture of opposing elements”. Her portrayal of the complex character is a triumph.

The performance presents “opposing elements” throughout and the excellent ensemble cast multi-role their way through the production with precision and definition. DE is particularly notable in his portrayal of Laura’s darker inner voice. In the sequence where Laura encounters her “conscience alley”, DE captures the immediate attention of the audience with his dark seductive tone and sleek physicalisation of the role.

The group of five actors and one musician have created a very powerful original piece of theatre. FG, the musician, stated that the group wanted to include “layers of ambiguity and irony” in order to reflect the depth of Frost’s poem, a poem which on the surface feels quite tame. FG also explained that her underscoring

accompaniment, which was an original composition, contains “both dark and light tones”. “I played the piano throughout the performance to create the desired atmosphere and I could sense, from our rehearsals, that my intentions were achieved”

A must see performance for all who appreciate the talents of young people and for those who can still remember the dilemmas of their teenage lives.

The Road not Taken runs in the *** Community Hall from Wednesday May 21st until Friday May 23rd with a Press Preview on VIP Opening Night, Tuesday May 20th. The VIP Opening Night begins with a Press reception at 7.00 pm. All other evenings are scheduled for an 8.00pm start.

The production is 30 minutes duration.

Tickets are on sale at *** College Reception and are priced at £5 perAdult and £3 Concession.

For more information contact the Press Officer, Miss Student, at www.student.com



The cast in rehearsal of “The Road not Taken”

End

This production has been sponsored by **** and we take this opportunity to thank them for their generous support.

(Sponsor’s Logo here)