

## **ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING SCRIPTS**

Evaluating scripts is a very subjective process. Different things appeal to different people. This document is intended as a guide to help you consider different aspects of the potential of a script. In each of the areas there are a number of questions to think about as you read the script. This is obviously not an exhaustive list but a guide to start you thinking about evaluating the work. Not all of the questions may apply to every script; they are intended as guidelines only.

### **DIALOGUE**

- Is the dialogue realistic for each character?
- Does the dialogue flow?
- Are there unnecessary areas of dialogue that can be performed rather than said?
- Are the speeches too long or too short?
- Is the word choice appropriate?
- Is the exposition indirect?
- Is there subtext?
- Does the style of dialogue suit the characterisation?
- Is the action in the 'now' rather than characters discussing past events?
- Will the dialogue be easy for actors to speak?

### **CHARACTER**

- Are the characters well drawn and three dimensional?
- Are the characters believable?
- Does each character have a purpose for being in the play?
- Do you care about what happens to the characters?
- Are the characters revealed through their actions not just what is said to them or about them?

### **STORY**

- Is the story interesting? Do you want to read/see more?
- Is the structure of the play appropriate for the story and themes of the play?
- Are the themes clear?
- Does the content sustain the length of the script? (ie Is there too much or too little story for the performance time?)
- Is the play engaging from the beginning?
- Are all the scenes necessary to progress the story?
- Does each scene have a beginning, middle and end?

### **THEATRICALITY**

- Can you visualise the play being performed on stage?
- Is it a play or more suited to another medium such as TV or film?
- Does it make use of theatrical devices?
- Will it be interesting to watch?

- Will the story be told through action as well as words?
- Is the setting unique or unusual?

### **DRAMATIC TENSION**

- Is the writing engaging and interesting?
- Is there conflict between and/or within the characters?
- Is the plot well constructed?
- Is it predictable or are there surprises for the audience?
- Does the story develop to a climax?
- Is the ending of the play supported by the scenes that precede it?
- Are there natural ebbs and flows of tension throughout the piece that work up to a climax, or is it all at one level of intensity?

### **OVERALL IMPRESSION**

It may also be useful to the writer to provide your general impressions of the work. Not so much whether you liked it or not, but what aspects you felt worked or advanced the script, what held it back and what was your overall 'gut reaction' to the play as a whole. As we know, a play should be greater than the sum of its parts so while the five areas (above) are useful to look at individually to provide detailed feedback, instinctive reactions to the script are also valuable and these should be provided.

### **REPORTING YOUR EVALUATION**

Once you have considered the above areas you need to provide a written report for the writer. You do not need to address each individual dot point above but can use the questions as a guide to provide comments on the play in each of the main areas. Give general comments on the potential of the play and whether you think it should be recommended for a reading. If you need further guidance on preparing the report, consult with the other members of your panel.