

The New Writing Policies of Clive Perry and Stephen MacDonald at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, 1966-79

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The presentation of such plays as Stewart Conn's *The Burning* (1971) and Bill Bryden's *Willie Rough* (1972) are remembered as landmark events. Their impact was such that, leaving aside the case of a specialist New Writing theatre like the Traverse, an impression often exists that the main house source of New Writing in the Scottish theatre in the seventies was the Royal Lyceum under Clive Perry when Bill Bryden was Associate Director.¹ An initial sense of this period's undoubted significance may be derived from the bald statistic that, of the six important plays included in Bill Findlay's recent anthology, *Scots Plays of the Seventies*,² half were premièred at Perry's Royal Lyceum when Bryden was Associate Director from 1970 until 1974. There is no question that, under Perry, the Royal Lyceum was an important provider of theatrical New Writing. Yet it was only with time that the presentation of New Writing became an important factor in its work: its approach to that provision developed from 1966 until 1976.

Meantime, in the seventies, another key main house figure, Stephen MacDonald, was in post as Artistic Director from 1972 to 1976 of Dundee Rep, his first production being in January 1973, and from 1976 until 1979 of the Royal Lyceum. His seminal productions include Hector MacMillan's *The Rising* (1973) and *The Royal Visit* (1974) and Stewart Conn's *Play Donkey* (1977). The first of these is also included in Bill Findlay's anthology. As we shall see, MacDonald's work both at Dundee and the Royal Lyceum was also crucial in developing the presentation of new work by main house companies. This paper will evaluate the nature and impact of Perry and Macdonald's New Writing policies on the development of contemporary Scottish theatre, something that has gone largely unanalysed or discussed.

The analysis undertaken will begin, after a brief discussion of the development of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, with a consideration of possible definitions of New Writing. Having proposed a number of definitions and categories, the paper will engage in a detailed analysis of the actual repertoire of the companies under discussion. This methodology is based on the premise that, whatever may be the claimed New Writing policy of a theatre, the only true way to understand what its New Writing policy actually is is to analyse the number and percentages of categories of New Writing production within its overall programme. In developing this argument, benchmarks will be provided from contemporaneous English theatre and the data will be analysed in a variety of perspectives, making use, as appropriate, of analytical tables. This process will conclude with a review of the actual achievement of the New Writing policies of the Perry and MacDonald periods at the Royal Lyceum in terms of their long-term influence. By these means the claims of each to having significant new writing policies will be tested.

It should be noted for the purposes of this analysis that both theatres during the periods under discussion also acted as hosts for visiting dance and sometimes opera companies. The focus of this study, however, will be on home-based drama production, with some consideration given to the implications for the repertoire of touring drama. In the case of the Royal Lyceum, detailed analysis will exclude the Festival period when the theatre is in effect pre-empted by the Edinburgh International Festival, except when the Royal Lyceum Company itself was involved in producing work during the Festival in its own house.

The Gateway Theatre Company and the development of the Royal Lyceum

The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company was founded in 1965. When it was founded under the sponsorship of the then Edinburgh Corporation as its civic theatre, the existing Edinburgh producing company, the Gateway Theatre Company wound itself up rather than see the funding, audience and, it may be deduced, the creative energy of Edinburgh theatre divided between two comparable companies. Moultrie Kelsall, then a Gateway Board member, offers evidence of this act of creative altruism that deserves to be more widely known:

We had known that the foundation of a Civic Theatre was being planned, but none of us had thought that it would materialise for at least another year. Then one evening Tom Fleming came to see me with the news that he had been invited by the Civic Theatre Trust to direct it, and that October 1965 was suggested as the opening month. I was delighted that he should have been chosen, and urged him to accept, but it necessitated an immediate decision by our Council as to the future of the Edinburgh Gateway Company. We had an assurance that if we decided to continue, the Arts Council would maintain its grant to us, though that would reduce the grant available for the Civic Theatre. We hardly felt that we could expect the Town Council to support two repertory companies, nor did we feel confident that the potential audience was yet large enough to do so. It seemed to us that both companies would suffer to some extent, however sedulously they tried to avoid clashes by offering complementary rather than competing programmes. Our financial position, though sound, was not such that we could take in our stride the probable loss of the Town Council grant and a drop in box-office receipts: costs would continue to rise, and a further Equity wage increase was forecast. To launch out on another season, as a bold gesture of confidence that more theatre would create more audience, had an undeniable attraction, but if we failed, the Civic Theatre, with its much greater resources, would be seen to have killed us, which would surely be an unbecoming end for the old venture and an unfortunate start for the new. We had maintained professional repertory in Edinburgh through thick and thin for twelve seasons, in the hope that stronger hands than ours would ultimately take over the responsibility, and that time had now come. Having completed our mission we should stand aside. It should be seen that the new enterprise had sprung from our loins, not our ashes – that here was growth, not murder. We had every confidence that under Tom Fleming's direction, and with two other members of our Council (Kemp and Miller) on the trust, the Civic Theatre would pursue a policy similar in essence to ours: we would not be open to the charge that, by closing, we had deprived our audience of the sort of theatrical nourishment they'd come to expect from us. Such were the considerations which decided us, after much heartsearching and with many pangs of nostalgia, to accept the prophetic implications of "Journey's End".³

This decision is clearly the more explicable in that Tom Fleming, one of the three founding members of the Gateway Company and a Board member of longstanding, was to be the Artistic Director of the new company and there was some continuity in Board membership. Further, many of the company members of the Royal Lyceum after 1965 were actors who had featured prominently in the Gateway Company including, for example, Martin Heller and Clare Richards. The Royal Lyceum was in effect the lineal continuation of the Gateway Theatre Company, itself founded in 1953. In 1966, after an unhappy year at the Royal Lyceum, Tom Fleming withdrew and Clive Perry became Artistic Director. There, with Richard Eyre and, later, Bill Bryden, Perry developed a lively company, with a strong record, ultimately, of supporting Scottish work which included the Premières of a number of key modern Scots plays including, of course, as already noted, *The Burning* and *Willie Rough*.

During his term of office, in the 1971-72 season, Perry opened a small studio theatre at the back of the Upper Circle.⁴ In this, because it held only about sixty people in cramped conditions, only a few plays were ever performed. (The space itself is now an electrical plant room.) After this experiment, in 1975, Perry opened the Lyceum Studio Theatre on the site in Cambridge Street of what is now the Traverse Theatre. The building used had been the offices of the Edinburgh Festival and, after those offices moved to Market Street, the site of such famous experimental International Festival productions as Grotowski's *Acropolis* (1968) and André Gregory's *Alice in Wonderland* (1971). Perry also had established in 1972, under the initial leadership of Peter Farago, the Young Lyceum Company. This was not dedicated, as its name might suggest, to Theatre for Young People: there had already been since 1969 a Lyceum Theatre in Education company, initially led by Brian Stanyon and from 1971 by Sue Birtwhistle, which had met that need.⁵ The Young Lyceum Company had a different focus. It comprised a troupe of bright young actors including such as Alec Heggie, Iain (later Kenny) Ireland, Mary McCusker, and Patrick Malahide. Its repertoire, including work, for example, by Orton, Stoppard and, at Christmas, David Wood, was meant to complement that of the main house, although it was occasionally presented in it, and to offer a showcase for young talent. Its work was presented for a time at the Netherbow Theatre and then in the Lyceum Studio.

In taking over the Lyceum in 1966, Perry took over a company that had established a recent history of presenting Scottish plays within a mix of classic, international and modern work, marking it as not only lineal successor, but in many ways the artistic continuation of the Gateway Company. Perry in time developed New Writing within this programme, something MacDonald developed when he took over in 1976. Both men achieved a remarkable level of such production, given that the Royal Lyceum was not, like the Traverse, a dedicated New Writing theatre company. As we shall see, however, MacDonald achieved a higher level even than Perry and, in this, was not initiating a new policy for him. His period at Dundee Rep, 1973-76, also involved considerable support for the production of New Writing.

Definitions of 'New Writing'

Before carrying out the analysis which will support these propositions, however, it would be helpful to consider what the definition of 'New Writing' may be. In one sense, the term is clear: 'New Writing' in the upper case is a term much used in theatrical and Arts Council policy documents and may be understood as the production of plays newly written for the theatre, often, but not necessarily, on commission. This definition, however, leaves certain grey areas.

One of these areas is that of adaptation. The question may be asked in what sense an adaptation is *new*, given that it is a version of a pre-existing work, whether novel, short story, play or film, the most frequent sources for stage adaptation in recent years. Yet, it is the case in a practical sense that Arts Council New Writing funding both north and south of the Border has been made available for adaptation regularly in the last thirty years. Further, there are clear cases where adaptation has been seen as the creation of a new work with its own value and energy. Indeed, the two cases of Grotowski and Gregory's work referred to above illustrate the point. Further, two more recent examples in British theatre of creative, and arguably original, adaptation are that by David Edgar of Charles Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* (1980) and by Harry Gibson of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* (1994). It is no part of the intention of this paper to debate whether adaptation represents original creative work. For the purposes of this paper it is accepted that the act of adaptation is an act, if not of creation, then of re-creation. It is also accepted that it is not an act of originality of the kind that obtains when a playwright conceives a new work *ab initio*. It is recognised, nonetheless, that new adaptations are, within the general terms of Arts Council and theatre terminology and usage, seen as *New Writing* and, indeed, that they represent the Première of a version of the adapted text not seen before. This paper will therefore include adaptation presented for the first time as New

Writing, but in the analysis provide a sub-category of New Writing, *Adaptations*, which will be in contra-distinction to the category, *Premières*, used exclusively for the first presentation of original plays.

A related grey area is that of translation. There is a large and complex literature on the topic of translation studies and the question of the creativity of the translator is a vexed one. Despite this, it is arguable that the act of translation, however creative, of one text into another and represented as a translation of the original does not constitute New Writing. Indeed, in this convention, a translator is often seeking to become in effect invisible, impossible as that may be, and render a 'faithful' translation. In such cases, a translation cannot be considered New Writing in the context of *New Writing*. In some cases, however, a translation may consciously and explicitly involve a process of adaptation. This may even involve relocating a text to another culture as Robert Kemp does in *Let Wives Tak Tent*, his 1948 version of Molière's *École des femmes*. Here he sets characters and plot in a geographically explicit Edinburgh with Scots names for the characters and a wealth of local detail, a device he takes even further in *The Laird o' Grippy* (1955), based on Molière's *L'Avare*. The variety of such practices has caused a recent doctoral thesis upon the topic to include specifically in its title the terms, *translations*, *versions* and *adaptations*.⁶ Given this context, translation will not in this paper be included as New Writing, unless the translation is also specifically described as an adaptation. In such a case, it will be included under the category *Adaptation*. (Such a case is Tom Gallacher's version of *An Enemy of the People* (1979) described as 'newly translated and adapted'.)

One final grey area to be considered before carrying out the analyses is that of second productions. Arts Councils have perceived as a problem the fact that very often, having achieved production, new plays are allowed to fade from the stage, despite a potential for further production. This led the Scottish Arts Council, on the advice of the then Drama Director, John Faulkner, to introduce a funding scheme to support second productions in 1973.⁷ The Theatre Writer's Union subsequently raised the issue in England. As a result of such representations, the Arts Council of Great Britain introduced in 1988, on the model of the seventies Scottish scheme, a specifically targeted Second Production Scheme to provide incentive funding to encourage the second production of new work in England.⁸ In a strict sense, then, second productions have been included in both the discourse and the funding practice of playwriting and funding bodies in the spectrum of New Writing. Such productions are, of their nature, often omitted from any analysis of New Writing activity. Yet, it would seem at least arguable that the support of a New Writing culture within a given theatre might reasonably extend to a policy of presenting second productions of recent new work. In the categories employed in this paper, therefore, *Second Productions* will be included in the analyses. This inclusion recognises an argument that such productions reflect a commitment to a broader New Writing culture than that defined simply in terms of newly commissioned work. The reservation is entered, however, that further work would need to be carried out, perhaps in a larger sample with more comparators, to establish what positive correlation in fact exists within production records that include both *Premières* and *Second Productions* and between these and those which exclude *Second Productions*. For present purposes, however, it will be accepted, following funding body and industry practice, that *Second Productions* are a category of New Writing.

New writing policy at the Royal Lyceum under Clive Perry

During the period 1966-76, under the leadership of Clive Perry, the Royal Lyceum showed a developing commitment to New Writing in its various forms in home-based main house productions. This commitment, however, did not begin immediately. In 1966-67, for example, there was only one *Première* out of fourteen home productions and, in the following year, while there were two *Adaptations*, there were no *Premières*. In 1968-69, however, there was a surge of *Première* activity with four new plays, the highest figure seen until the *annus mirabilis* of 1972-73,

when five home-based Premières were presented as well as a Second Production. In general, though, in the initial three years, two new plays a year on average were presented, occasionally accompanied by an Adaptation or a Second Production. Table 1 demonstrates the pattern of these productions. As will be seen, the table also provides an analysis of this record in five perspectives: Premières, Adaptations, Second Productions, Premières and Adaptations and all three New Writing forms overall, presented as a percentage of all home-based productions in a given season.

Table 1 The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh:

New Writing in the home main house repertoire -- seasons 1966-76

	Premières	Adaptations	Second Productions	Total of all plays	Premières as %age of total (a)	Adaptations as %age of total (b)	Second Productions as %age of total (c)	Premières & Adaptations as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)
1966-67	1	0	0	14	7	-	-	7	7
1967-68	0	2	0	16	-	13	-	13	13
1968-69	4	0	0	13	31	-	-	31	31
1969-70	2	0	0	10	20	-	-	20	20
1970-71	2	1	0	13	15	8	-	23	23
1971-72	3	1	0	15	20	7	-	27	27
1972-73	5	0	1	10	50	-	10	50	60
1973-74	2	0	1	7	29	-	14	29	43
1974-75	2	0	0	10	20	-	-	20	20
1975-76	2	0	0	7	29	-	-	29	29

It is clear that, after a slow start, there was a significant level of presentation of New Writing at the Royal Lyceum in the Perry years. Only in the first two years did the percentage of New Writing presentation fall below 20%. After the sudden surge to 31% in 1968-69, there is a steady growth in the percentages from 20% in 1969-70 over the next two years until 1972-73 when the percentage rises to 60%, an atypically high figure. 1973-74 falls away to a still very high figure of 43%, before in the last two years, a return to the earlier norms of a percentage in the twenties. The role of Premières rather than Adaptations is significant in this figure. After one appears in 1966-67 and none in 1967-68, the secondary peak year of 1968-69 shows a percentage of 31% for Premières. Thereafter, a percentage in the twenties usually prevails, except in 1970-71 when the figure drops to 15% offset by an Adaptation, and in the peak year of 1972-73 when it surges to 50%. It can be seen from this analysis that the primary means of providing New Writing in the decade was that of

								(a+b)	(a+b+c)
1967-70	6	2	0	39	15	5	-	21	21
1970-73	10	2	1	38	26	5	3	31	34
1973-76	6	0	1	24	25	-	4	25	29

From this table it can be seen that both in the categories of Premières and Adaptations Perry in the period 1970-76 achieved far higher figures than were prevalent in England in the parallel period 1971-75. The table further throws into high relief a significant difference between the first triennium and the latter two. In the first triennium, New Writing overall constitutes only 21% of the repertoire, and within that only 15% comprises Premières, the remainder being Adaptations (although both these figures are higher than those achieved in English theatres in the nearest comparable period for which figures are available, 1971-75). In the second triennium, 1970-73, by contrast, over a third, 34% of the repertoire, is made up of New Writing, and within that over a quarter, 26%, is made up of Premières. Although there is some falling away in the third triennium to 29%, this is still approaching a third of the programme and within that Premières scarcely fall away at all, achieving 25% against the 26% of the second triennium, a statistically insignificant variation. An interesting feature of the third triennium, however, is that there are no Adaptations presented in that period, although there is a steady level of Second Production, much the same level of Second Production as in the second triennium.

What may strike the reader is that the Royal Lyceum triennia accord very closely with the periods of currency of different leading associates, under different titles, to Clive Perry. In the first period, Richard Eyre is dominant, leaving in 1971, in the second Bill Bryden who arrived in 1970 is dominant, he leaving in 1974, and in the final period Peter Farago is Perry's leading associate. It is tempting to suggest that such a correlation of New Writing repertoire content and leading associate is a result of more than random chance.

An analysis of the main house and home-based Festival repertoire in the first triennium throws up a further consideration. The Premières presented are by Ann Jellicoe, Thomas Kilroy, Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, Henry Cecil, Richard Harris and Stanley Eving. In short, only the last is a Scottish writer. Not only is there a substantial increase in the presentation of New Writing in the period when Bryden takes over from Eyre, but the constitution of the programme of Premières is different. The Premières in the second triennium include new plays by John McGrath, Robert Hawdon, Stewart Conn, Bill Bryden, Ronald Miller, Wolf Mankowitz, Ronald Mavor, Roddy McMillan, Ian Brown and Stewart Conn (again). In this case, seven out of ten plays are by Scottish writers (six out of ten if McGrath, who was then based in England and seen as an English writer, is considered despite his later adoption of Scotland and a Scottish base as an English writer). In the final triennium, this pattern continues with new plays by Ian Brown,¹⁰ Bill Bryden, Sean McCarthy, Anthony Shaffer, John Morris and Jimmy Logan, where Scottish writers write five out of six. It is not simply, therefore, that in the first triennium fewer Premières are presented, but that fewer Premières by Scottish playwrights are presented. Indeed, it is only at the very end of the first triennium that the first play by a writer based in Scotland, Stanley Eving, is presented. Clearly a sea-change took place with the invitation of Clive Perry to Bill Bryden to work at the Royal Lyceum. This established a pattern that was sustained, the sole difference when Bryden left being that Adaptations appear to have gone out of favour.

It is clear therefore that the reputation of the Perry-Bryden years at the Royal Lyceum as being particularly fruitful for New Writing and especially the first performance of new Scottish plays is a justified one. Those years mark a clear shift in repertoire content and emphasis of work premièred from the Perry-Eyre triennium. Further their influence can be seen to continue to cast a strong shadow over the third, Perry-Farago, triennium.

Stephen MacDonald and New Writing policy at Dundee Rep, 1973-76

Stephen MacDonald became Artistic Director of Dundee Rep at the beginning of 1973. After an initial half-year season, he stayed for three years, before becoming Artistic Director of the Royal Lyceum in 1976 as successor to Clive Perry. Table 5 follows the format of tables 1 and 4 in analysing the nature of his New Writing home repertoire in MacDonald's period at Dundee Rep.

Table 5 Dundee Repertory Theatre

New Writing in home repertoire, 1973-76

	Premières	Adaptations	Second Productions	Total of all plays	Premières as %age of total (a)	Adaptations as %age of total (b)	Second Productions as %age of total (c)	Premières & Adaptations as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)
Spring 1973	1	0	1	7	14	-	14	14	28
1973-74	2	0	3	13	15	-	23	15	38
1974-75	4	1	1	14	29	7	7	36	43
1975-76	4	1	1	13	31	8	8	39	46
Triennium 1973-76	10	2	5	40	25	5	13	30	43

Rather as was the case with Perry in his first year at the Royal Lyceum, MacDonald's first half-season includes relatively little New Writing as compared with his later work. It is in the next three years that he established the pattern of his New Writing policy and repertoire. Nonetheless, in that half season he achieved at once levels of overall provision which match those of Perry's third triennium (28% against Perry's 29%) although MacDonald's season comprises 14% Premières and 14% Second Productions. (The 14% of Premières compares favourably with the 12% for this category in the Cork figures for the relevant quadrennium.) Further, he matches in year one the highest annual percentage of Second Productions ever achieved by Perry at the Royal Lyceum. In fact, there are only two Second Productions in that period at the Royal Lyceum, one in 1972-73 and another in 1973-74. From this, it may be deduced that MacDonald appeared to place greater emphasis on Second Production within the context of his New Writing repertoire. That this is so may be seen in the next year, 1973-74. In that year, indeed, Premières at 14% are exceeded by Second Productions at 23%. Such a figure far exceeded the highest level of 14% for Second Productions found at the Royal Lyceum between 1967 and 1976. The seasons from 1973 to 1976 at Dundee Rep are clearly focused on developing and presenting New Writing in a variety of forms.

That this is so is made clear by the evidence of the 1974-75 season. There for the first time we find MacDonald including Adaptation in his repertoire with 7% of the season, a figure matching that of the reduced Second Production also 7%, and now exceeded greatly by Premières running at 29%, producing an overall figure of 43%. This means that, in his second full year, MacDonald had already achieved figures for Premières and New Writing overall which exceeded by a significant amount anything seen at the Royal Lyceum under Perry until the *annus mirabilis* of 1972-73 and after that only matched by the following year 1973-74. Indeed, the Royal Lyceum, 1973-74, and Dundee Rep, 1974-75, match exactly on percentages for Premières (29%) and New Writing overall (43%). Clearly, what Perry achieved was quite remarkable. The extent of MacDonald's achievement, therefore, is the more clearly seen, benchmarked against Perry's high level of achievement, and even more clearly seen against the Cork quadrennial figures for 1971-75, 12% and 18% respectively.

That this was not chance is borne out by Dundee Rep figures for 1975-76. Here, MacDonald actually raises marginally the percentage of new work in every category, reaching 31% Premières, 8% each Adaptations and Second Productions and 43% New Writing overall. From this, it is evident that he was committed to an even more thoroughgoing and varied New Writing repertoire than that of the Royal Lyceum in the early seventies. This is made most evident by consideration of the figures for the triennium, 1973-76, at Dundee. While the Premières figure (25%) matches the Royal Lyceum in both the triennia, 1970-73 and 1973-76, and Adaptations (5%) matches the Royal Lyceum 1970-73 triennium, the percentage of Second Productions at 13% far exceeds the 3% or 4% found at the Royal Lyceum in the relevant triennia. MacDonald, in short, matches the Royal Lyceum repertoire in the presentation of entirely new plays and of Adaptations, but significantly exceeds it in the presentation of Second Productions of new plays. This is a clear policy difference and one which achieves overall higher figures of presentation of new work at Dundee in the periods under review.

The Premières presented at Dundee Rep in the triennium 1973-76 included plays by Hector MacMillan, Stephen MacDonald, Hector MacMillan (again), John McGrath, Calum Mill, Victor Carin, David Milne, W Gordon Smith, John Cairney, Tom Gallacher, Andrew Cruikshank, Tom Fleming, David Milne (again), John McGrath (again), and Billy Connolly. Here, out of fifteen Premières, all are by Scottish writers. This compares with figures set out above for the Royal Lyceum as follows:

1967-70 1 out of 6

1970-73 7 out of 10

1973-76 5 out of 6.

As already noted there was an increasingly high proportion of Scottish writers among those whose work was premièreed at the Perry Royal Lyceum between 1967 and 1976. Nonetheless, the MacDonald triennium at Dundee Rep achieved a level of 100% Premières by Scottish writers, as well as a higher number of Premières than any triennium at the Royal Lyceum between 1967 and 1976.

New Writing policy at the Royal Lyceum under Stephen MacDonald

It is against the background both of the three triennia at the Perry Royal Lyceum between 1967 and 1976 and his own triennium 1973-76 at Dundee Rep, that Stephen MacDonald's New Writing policies when he became Artistic Director of the Royal Lyceum may be judged. Before drawing any conclusions, however, against that background, it is necessary to consider MacDonald's performance with regard to New Writing during the period of his directorship of the Royal Lyceum. Table 6 sets out that performance with regard to his home repertoire.

Table 6 The Royal Lyceum Theatre Company, Edinburgh

New Writing in home repertoire, 1976-79

	Premières	Adaptations	Second Productions	Total of all plays	Premières as %age of total (a)	Adaptations as %age of total (b)	Second Productions as %age of total (c)	Premières & Adaptations as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)
1976-77	3	0	1	13	23	-	8	23	31
1977-78	5	1	3	22	23	5	14	28	37
1978-79	7	3	1	18	39	17	6	56	62
Triennium 1976-79	15	4	5	53	28	8	9	36	45

In reviewing this table it is important to bear in mind certain key shifts in the use of his main house and studio that MacDonald introduced. Perry had allowed the Lyceum Studio to be in effect the home base of the Young Lyceum Company, which operated a separate season from the main house, except when occasionally it was invited to present a main house production. MacDonald, by contrast, integrated the studio work of the Lyceum into the mainhouse operation, renaming the Lyceum Studio the Little Lyceum. He explains the reason for this:

I always wanted the two theatres on an equal footing. I made it a condition of accepting the job [of Artistic Director of the Royal Lyceum]. They told me about the 1977 big theatre closure after I'd been in situ for a few days. ¹¹

This last reference is to the fact that when he arrived to take up post in the summer of 1976, he was informed that the main house would have to close for at least six months for renovation and refurbishment. This it did for the first part of 1977, leaving only the former Studio in which the Royal Lyceum Company could perform. The main house reopened in September 1977 and throughout his three years, MacDonald programmed the same company across both venues. He used the Little Lyceum as an artistic alternative to the main house for specific plays and gave plays produced in the Little Lyceum as much priority as those in the main house.

From Table 6, it is evident that MacDonald at the Royal Lyceum continued the wide-ranging policy that he had developed at Dundee. He presented a level of Premières that matched within three percentage points those of the previous two triennia at the Royal Lyceum. Not only did he do this, however, but, after his first year, he matched and then trebled the number of Adaptations while introducing Second Productions as an important strand in his programming of new work. As a result, he not only maintained in his first two years a substantial level of Premières. He also achieved overall New Writing figures which match or are higher than any but the two highest years of the earlier directorate, 31% and 37% against peaks of 43% (1973-74) and 60% (1972-73). In his final year, indeed, MacDonald goes even beyond these levels. Then, he achieved a figure for his final season of 39% Premières, complemented by 17% Adaptations and 6% Second Productions. This resulted in a single year Premières and Adaptations figure of 56% and an overall New Writing figure of 62%, both higher than anything achieved before at the Royal Lyceum. By comparison, the figures

for England for the relevant Cork quadrennium, 1976-80, are for Premières, 13%, and for Premières and Adaptations, 18%. The contrast in the English comparison is stark.

The New Writing policies of Clive Perry and Stephen MacDonald

A comparison of this performance across the triennia under review will allow for the skewing effect of peak years and may best be seen from Table 7.

Table 7 New Writing in home repertoire by triennia

	Premières as %age of total (a)	Adaptations as %age of total (b)	Second Productions as %age of total (c)	Premières & Adaptations as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)
RLT - 1967- 70	15	5	-	21	21
RLT - 1970- 73	26	5	3	31	34
RLT - 1973- 76	25	-	4	25	29
D Rep - 1973- 76	25	5	13	30	43
RLT - 1976- 79	28	8	9	36	45

From this it is clear that in terms of Premières, after 1970, both the Royal Lyceum and Dundee Rep were showing a consistent average of 25% of repertoire until MacDonald's arrival at the Royal Lyceum when the figure rose for the triennium 1976-79 to 28%. Again, with the exception of the period 1973-76 at the Royal Lyceum, there is a consistency across the triennia regarding Adaptations, in this case on 5%, until MacDonald's period at the Royal Lyceum when again there is an increase, now to 8%. After 1970, Premières and Adaptations figures are produced of around 30%, with a dip to 25% for the Royal Lyceum in the period 1973-76, but a major surge to 36% at the Royal Lyceum under MacDonald. We see, however, variations within a generally established policy of supporting New Writing through Premières and Adaptations. The major difference between the two regimes, and one that is clearly correlated with MacDonald's own New Writing practices, is the difference in Second Productions. The highest percentage achieved at the Royal Lyceum before 1976 is 4% in the period 1973-76. In the same period MacDonald achieved 3% at Dundee, followed by 9% for his period at the Royal Lyceum. The effect of this on New Writing presentation is striking. The Royal Lyceum achieves the figure of 21% in 1967-70, high in comparison with the Cork data, and the significantly higher figures of 34% and 29% in the next two triennia. Yet, MacDonald achieves a rate almost fifty per cent higher, 43% at Dundee Rep in 1973-76 and 45% at the Royal Lyceum in 1976-79.

It is clear that the broader Second Production policy adopted by MacDonald of work premièred by other theatre companies widened and deepened the range of support for New Writing he could offer. Two further points arise here worthy of consideration. One is that, as noted earlier, the reason the Scottish Arts Council launched its Second Production scheme in 1973 was a perception that there was an obsession with Premières. This was seen to lead to a failure by directors to exploit the good work created by others in favour of their 'own' commissioned work. Of course, not every play that is presented is worthy of second performance: New Writing is by its nature experimental and experiments may fail. Nonetheless, there is a perceived reluctance of directors to follow up new work unless it be seen as a safe popular hit, such as, in recent years in Scotland, both *The Steamie* (1987) and *Mary Queen of Scots got her head chopped off* (1987). This may mean that work that is tested and tried may not achieve the further exposure it deserves. This additionally means that theatres are missing the box office opportunity of building on a partially known quantity, so that the failure may be economic as well as artistic. Secondly, Second Productions often involve an element of rewriting and development growing out of the experience of the Première production. This means that often the play presented as a Second Production is a strengthened version of the first production. Certainly, Stewart Conn's *The Aquarium* premièred at the Royal Lyceum in May 1973 and then produced a second time at Dundee Rep in September 1973 is a good example of this process: the play was substantially revised between its first and second productions. Other examples include Dundee's production of Victor Carin's adaptation of von Kleist, *The Chippit Chantie*, in May 1974 following a Première at the Royal Lyceum in August 1968 and Hector MacMillan's *The Gay Gorbals*, presented in May 1976 after its Traverse Theatre Première in February 1976.¹² In short, the attractiveness to an audience of a Second Production may lie in the fact that a play already developed and, to an extent, known is likely to be strengthened for its second production.

The effect of visiting productions on New Writing policies

So far, this article has focused on home productions. It may be argued, however, that in the artistic policy of the two theatres under review, there was a wider artistic vision expressed through the selection of touring product. This formed a small but significant part of the programme of the theatres in the period being discussed, although much less at the Royal Lyceum under MacDonald, presumably because of the changes at the theatre following refurbishment and the changed use of the Studio/Little Lyceum. Table 8 sets out the drama repertoire for the seasons under review broken down with Premières identified, and as noted previously both dance and opera excluded:

Table 8 Visiting repertoire

	1966-1967	1967-1968	1968-1969	1969-1970	1970-1971	1971-1972	1972-1973	1973-1974	1974-1975	1975-1976	1976-1977	1977-1978	1978-1979
RLT Premières	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	0
Total	1	1	3	2	1	3	4	4	4	0	1	0	0
D Rep Premières								2	2	2			
Total								2	2	2			

What is striking about this table is the high level of Premières included in visiting productions at Dundee Rep under MacDonald. Again this appears to be a strategic policy decision related to a commitment to a positive New Writing policy. Indeed, the one visiting production at the Royal Lyceum under MacDonald is also a Première. Perry has clearly a steady interest in visiting work, but there is no clear correlation between visiting productions and Premières. Table 9 sets out the results achieved when visiting drama is included in the analysis of New Writing repertoire on the Royal

Lyceum (for comparative purposes the figure for home Première percentage and overall home New Writing percentage from table 1 are included.)

Table 9 Visiting Premières' effect on Perry's Royal Lyceum programme in relevant years

	Premières	Adaptation	Second Production	Total	Premières as %age of total (a)	Home Premières as %age of total	Adaptation as %age of total (b)	Second Production as %age of total (c)	Première & Adaptation as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)	Home New Writing as %age of total
1969-70	3	0	0	12	25	20	-	-	25	25	20
1971-72	5	1	0	18	28	20	66	-	34	34	27
1972-73	6	0	1	14	43	50	-	6	43	49	60
1974-75	4	0	0	14	29	20	-	-	29	29	20

It can be seen from this that the effect of including visiting work in the relevant four years is, in three of those years, to increase significantly both Premières and overall New Writing percentages. As if to demonstrate the point already made, however, that no overall visiting production policy seemed to exist at Perry's Royal Lyceum, the effect of these visiting productions in 1972-73 already referred to as the *annus mirabilis*, is to reduce the percentage in both categories. In the case of New Writing overall, the reduction is substantial, from 60% to 49%, still a very high figure, of course, for a single year. At Dundee Rep, however, where a policy of bringing in visiting work to complement a New Writing policy is evident, a contrasting picture emerges in table 10:

Table 10 Visiting Premières: effect on Dundee Rep repertoire 1973-76

	Premières	Adaptation	Second Production	Total	Premières as %age of total (a)	Home Premières as %age of total	Adaptation as %age of total (b)	Second Production as %age of total (c)	Première & Adaptation as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)	Home New Writing as %age of total
1973-74	4	0	3	15	27	15	-	20	27	47	38
1974-75	6	1	1	17	35	29	6	6	41	47	43
1975-76	6	1	1	15	40	31	7	7	47	54	46

From this it is clear that the visiting productions at Dundee Rep consistently increase the percentage relating to Premières and New Writing overall. The smallest increases in both categories are in 1974-75 (6% and 4%); otherwise the increases are in the range 8% to 12%, by any measure a substantial increase.

Table 11 includes visiting productions by triennia to provide an extension of Table 7:

Table 11 New Writing in Home and Visiting Repertoire by triennia

	Premières	Total	Premières as %age of total (a)	Adaptations as %age of total (b)	Second Productions as %age of total (c)	Premières & Adaptations as %age of total (a+b)	New Writing as %age of total (a+b+c)
RLT-1967-70	7	45	16	4	-	20	20
RLT-1970-73	13	46	28	4	2	32	34
RLT-1973-76	8	32	25	-	3	25	28
D Rep 1973-76	16	47	34	4	11	38	49
RLT 1976-79	16	54	30	7	9	37	46

From this analysis it is clear that Clive Perry's programming policy at the Royal Lyceum foregrounded New Writing very strongly particularly in the period, 1970-1976. It is also clear that not only did Stephen MacDonald's Dundee policy parallel the achievements of Perry, but that when he took over the Royal Lyceum, MacDonald's achievement exceeded even Perry's. It is also clear that, although Perry came firmly to support new Scottish writing, MacDonald focused from the beginning exclusively on New Writing by Scottish writers.

What is also striking about MacDonald's programming is the consistency with which he developed a programme policy for Dundee Rep that he carried over into the Royal Lyceum. In this move, he varied his programming only to the extent that, as he increased the number of home-based New Writing productions at the Royal Lyceum, he left no room for visiting productions, whether Premières or not. This coherent and varied policy causes his achievement to differ from, and effectively exceed, that of Perry.

The long-term importance of Perry and MacDonald's New Writing policies

It may be questioned, given the analysis undertaken already, whether the New Writing policies discussed had any long-term effect on Scottish theatre. It is, of course, entirely possible that a New Writing policy of the kind both of these directors developed might involve playwrights whose work had no lasting significance and who were themselves quickly forgotten. The nature of their achievement in support of Scottish dramatic writing, therefore, requires analysis from this further perspective, consideration also being given to the extent to which they premièred the same playwrights.

In Perry's Royal Lyceum, plays by Scottish playwrights that were premièred were by Ian Brown, Bill Bryden, Stewart Conn, Stanley Eveling, Jimmy Logan, Sean McCarthy, John McGrath, Roddy MacMillan, Ronald Mavor and John Morris. At Dundee, MacDonald premièred plays by John Cairney, Victor Carin, Billy Connolly, Andrew Cruikshank, Tom Fleming, Tom Gallacher, Stephen MacDonald, Hector MacMillan, Calum Mill, David Milne and W Gordon Smith. At the Royal Lyceum,

MacDonald premièred plays by Ian Brown, Iain Cuthbertson, Stewart Conn, Tom Gallacher, Atholl Hay, John Haggerty, Stephen MacDonald, John McGrath, Howard Purdie and John Sutherland. Certain playwrights were premièred by both directors: these were Ian Brown, Stewart Conn and (including visiting Premières) John McGrath. For only three out of a total of twenty-six to be in common may suggest remarkably little overlap between the playwrights selected within the New Writing policies of Perry and MacDonald. It is further interesting to note that of the nineteen playwrights whose work was premièred by MacDonald, only two, Tom Gallacher and MacDonald himself, had new plays premièred at both theatres. Conn, however, had two Second Productions (*I Didn't Always Live Here* and *The Aquarium*) at Dundee and a Première (*Play Donkey*) and a Second Production (*The Burning*) at the Royal Lyceum, while Hector MacMillan had two Premières (*The Rising* and *The Royal Visit*) and a Second Production (*The Gay Gorbals*) at Dundee and a Second Production (*The Royal Visit*) at the Royal Lyceum.

One of the reasons for these results may be that Perry and Bryden had certain company playwrights, including Bryden himself, but also Brown, Conn, McCarthy and Morris, of whom MacDonald worked with only Brown and Conn, while having his own company writers in Gallacher, MacMillan and MacDonald himself. A further contributor to the lack of overlap between the lists of playwrights may be argued to be that fact that, while both Perry and MacDonald encouraged appropriate actors to write, Perry did so in a restricted manner. Perry premièred work by Jimmy Logan and Roddy MacMillan, who, it should be remembered, at the time of the development of *The Bevalliers* had had only one play, *All in Good Faith* (1954), presented, then seen as a youthful piece, and was predominantly known as a fine actor. MacDonald, on the other hand, presented work by six writers predominantly known as actors or actor/directors, John Cairney, Andrew Cruikshank, Iain Cuthbertson, Tom Fleming, Calum Mill and Stephen MacDonald himself. It may be that his own artistic development from actor/director to add playwriting to his craft may have made him sympathetic to other actors whose talents tended in a similar direction.

It is often difficult to assess the significance in a longer perspective of such Premières in the difficult area of theatrical reputation, influence and importance. In order to offer some evaluation of the importance of the writers developed and presented by these two directors, a tentative analysis of the long term importance of their work has been undertaken by a version of citation analysis. Three important texts of contemporary Scottish theatre history have been identified. These are Volume Four of the *Aberdeen History of Scottish Literature*¹³ (H), *Scottish Theatre since the Seventies*¹⁴ (S) and *A History of Scottish Theatre*¹⁵ (X). The indices of all three have been searched for references to Scottish playwrights premièred by Perry (P) and MacDonald (M) in the periods under review with the following results:

References in Indices of Three Key Critical/Historical Texts

Ian Brown	P/M	H	S	-	
Bill Bryden	P	H	S	X	
John Cairney	M	-	-	X	(as actor)
Victor Carin	M	-	S	-	
Stewart Conn	P/M	H	S	X	
Billy Connolly	M	H	S	X	
Andrew Cruikshank	M	-	-	-	
Iain Cuthbertson	M	-	S	X	(as director)
Stanley Eveling	P	H	S	X	

Tom Fleming	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	
Tom Gallacher	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	
Atholl Hay	<i>M</i>	-	-	-	
John Haggerty	<i>M</i>	-	-	-	
Jimmy Logan	<i>P</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	-	(as actor)
Sean McCarthy	<i>P</i>	-	-	-	
John McGrath	<i>P/M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	
Stephen MacDonald	<i>M</i>	-	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	(as director)
Hector MacMillan	<i>M</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	
Roddy MacMillan	<i>P</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>X</i>	
Ronald Mavor	<i>P</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>S</i>	-	
Calum Mill	<i>M</i>	-	-	-	
David Milne	<i>M</i>	-	-	-	
John Morris	<i>P</i>	-	-	-	
Howard Purdie	<i>M</i>	-	-	-	
W Gordon Smith	<i>M</i>	-	<i>S</i>	-	
John Sutherland	<i>M</i>	-	-	-	

From this analysis it can be seen that, of the ten playwrights premièred by Perry, eight are cited (seven as playwrights) in key historical texts and, of the nineteen premièred by MacDonald, twelve are cited (nine as playwrights). There are, of course, no clear norms for judging what is a 'good' result in this area. It is, nonetheless, clear that both directors developed through their New Writing policies new writing by playwrights whose significance has been seen in later authoritative texts as remaining significant in the development of Scottish theatre. This analysis, one hopes, may have allowed for a more robust understanding of the achievement of both directors and of their theatre in the development of new writing in the modern Scottish theatre.

Issues of New Writing definition and policy

This study has raised a number of other important issues, not only for the analysis of the performance of the Royal Lyceum with regard to New Writing productions in the years under analysis, but for any study of New Writing policy. Firstly, it is evident that a clear definition and understanding is required of what the nature of New Writing is. Secondly, it is clear that it is not enough to say that a theatre company supports New Writing, but that such a statement requires deeper analysis: a New Writing policy is sometimes seen as simply a matter of presenting Premières. This is something neither Perry nor MacDonald stopped at, rather varying the forms of home-produced New Writing provision they programmed. The effect of the mix of varieties of New Writing within any programming policy, therefore, must be addressed. Thirdly, even beyond this, the role of visiting productions and their effect on the overall programming of the home theatre must be considered. Finally, it is clearly an issue of policy as to how the mix and balance of New Writing forms is programmed. It is also, consequently, clear that within the overall rubric of a New Writing programming policy, differences of specific policy may have a significant effect on the overall impact of a given theatre's actual New Writing provision. In the case of this study, the question has not simply related to Premières or new Adaptations; it has related to the role of Second Production within the home programme and visiting productions on the overall programme.

In exploring important issues of New Writing policy and its analysis, then, this article has considered the nature of New Writing, its support and provision. It has primarily, however, demonstrated on a clear evidential basis the very great achievement in terms of significant New Writing development of the Perry decade at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, particularly in its last six years. It has gone further and recognised the sometimes neglected contribution of Stephen MacDonald as Artistic Director, first at Dundee Rep and then at the Royal Lyceum. It is clear that MacDonald was an innovative and challenging main house producer of New Writing with a lasting influence on the shaping of modern Scottish theatre.

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Endnotes.

¹ Randall Stevenson, for example, refers to the importance alongside the work of 7:84 Theatre Company (Scotland) and the Traverse Theatre Company of 'Bill Bryden's work with a Scottish company and Scottish dramatists at the Royal Lyceum in the early years of the seventies', in 'Snakes and Ladders, Snakes and Owls: Charting Scottish Theatre' in Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds), *Scottish Theatre since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.6; and Donald Campbell, *A Brighter Sunshine: A Hundred Years of the Edinburgh Royal Lyceum Theatre* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1983) also refers to the work of this period.

² Bill Findlay (ed), *Scots Plays of the Seventies*, (Dalkeith: Scottish Cultural Press, 2001). The plays referred to are: Stewart Conn, *The Burning* (1971), Bill Bryden, *Willie Rough* (1972), and Roddy McMillan, *The Bevellers* (1973).

³ Moultrie R. Kelsall, 'The Last Five', in Edinburgh Gateway Company, *The Twelve Seasons of the Edinburgh Gateway Company 1953-65* (Edinburgh: St Giles Press, 1965) pp. 40-41.

⁴ I am grateful to Paul Iles, Edinburgh, for supplying and confirming the dates regarding the history of the Royal Lyceum Theatre Company included in this paragraph.

⁵ This company continued until the establishment of Lothian Region as part of local government reorganisation in 1974 when the regional education authority took over the role of providing TIE in Edinburgh and its environs.

⁶ William (Bill) Findlay, *Motivation and Method in Scots Translations, Versions and Adaptations of Plays from the Historic Repertoire of Continental European Drama*, 2 vols. (Unpublished thesis: Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh, 2000).

⁷ Confirmed by John Faulkner, interview, 12 December 2001.

⁸ Confirmed by Charles Hart, New Writing Officer, Arts Council of England, interview, 12 December 2001.

⁹ *Theatre IS for All: the Report of the Enquiry into Professional Theatre in England under the Chairmanship of Sir Kenneth Cork* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986).

¹⁰ *The Knife* was presented in the then studio, but as part of the 1973 Edinburgh International Festival programme.

¹¹ Stephen MacDonald, private letter, 18 February 2002.

¹² In a letter of 13 April 2001, Stephen MacDonald refers to all three of these productions as 'REVISED 2nd PRODUCTIONS'.

¹³ Cairns Craig (ed), *Twentieth Century*, vol. 4 in Cairns Craig (ed), *The History of Scottish Literature*, 4 vols (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987-88).

¹⁴ Randall Stevenson and Gavin Wallace (eds), *Scottish Theatre since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996).

¹⁵ Bill Findlay (ed) *A History of Scottish Theatre* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998).