

SAC Evaluation Report

Event: Promote YT: National Festival of Youth Theatre, 2006

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Overall Rating: Good

Overall: I thought this was a very well organised and attended lively 3 day festival which provided excellent opportunities for young people to participate in workshops, perform their own work and meet with others from different parts of the country. I thought the programme itself was full, diverse and well-scheduled – with seven performances performed by youth theatre groups as well as a number of workshops led by professional practitioners (including clowning, ensemble, singing, martial arts, dancing). The young participants clearly appeared to be gaining a lot from the experience and the festival seemed to be a very positive way of encouraging young people to engage with the many possibilities that theatre can offer. The festival also allowed the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and information and general networking for youth theatre leaders. While the focus was, as intended, on the young participants, with extra resources, there was also clearly room to further develop opportunities more directed towards the group leaders.

Venue: Perth Theatre seemed a very appropriate venue for the festival – as well as having the theatre and workshop space, a good-sized area of the café was allocated as a meeting room for the festival. Two other spaces, both in easy walking distance from the Theatre, were also used for performances and workshops and the High Street, directly outside Perth Theatre, was used as a street theatre venue.

Information/ Advertising: The event did seem to be well advertised, with posters and leaflets well displayed in the venue – although the festival seemed to be catered towards those involved rather than the general public. Perhaps my only reservation was that the information pack that participants were given – though containing much useful information – didn't provide a particularly clear timetable of events and venues (I had to keep cross-referencing between the booklets of information contained).

Events: I saw a half hour long performance of 'Elegant Variation' performed and devised by young people aged 13-17 under the direction of 'Junction 25' (Jess Thorpe and Tashi Gore). The stalls of Perth Theatre were almost full with an audience of mainly young participants in the festival and their group leaders. Although there were a couple of technical hitches (there was a delay in starting and problems with the on-stage projections), the performers remained completely focussed and committed throughout this engaging and entertaining piece. Taking as its point of inspiration a visual arts exhibition at

Tramway in June 2006 entitled 'What Makes You and I Different' the production engaged in a sophisticated and professional way with the important theme of people's similarities and differences. Though, in many ways a challenging piece for both audience and performers, the production was produced and performed with great confidence and clarity and the audience responded very positively throughout.

I attended a discussion, facilitated by Agia Luna of ATIXOC (Barcelona), on the theme of youth theatre international exchanges. Approximately 30 group leaders attended the lively and stimulating discussion with representatives from, amongst many others, Hi-Arts, the National Theatre of Scotland, Junction 25, and the Lyceum Youth Theatre. The discussion covered wide ground – ranging from the purpose of youth theatre international exchanges, to the ethics of multiculturalism, to practical issues encountered on such exchanges. As well as being a useful opportunity for discussion in an informal yet focussed setting the event allowed youth leaders to network and exchange ideas.

I also saw West Lothian's short street show, 'Finding Home', performed on Perth High Street. I felt that there were some problems with the show – to do with sightlines, focus and audibility. However, although members of the public did seem a bit bewildered by the performance, the large audience of young NFYT participants seemed to enjoy the whole event and I thought it was thoughtful programming to have outdoor theatre included.