



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company:	Scottish Youth Theatre		
Venue:	Scottish Youth Theatre, The Old Sheriff Court, Brunswick Street, Glasgow		
Title of Event:	Summer Youth Theatre Festival Programme		
Type of Event:	Youth Theatre Programme, Junior Course for 8 – 11 year olds		
Date of Visit:	14 th August 2009		
Overall Rating:	Good		
<p>The course was well run and well delivered by an enthusiastic, dedicated and hard-working young team. The leaders were very sensitive to the needs of the young people and achieved a great deal in the course of just one week. Although they sought to achieve a lot in one week, they did not allow things to get too “product” focussed there was an obvious recognition that the process and what the young people got from the process was very important. It was obvious that there was a tried and tested formula and, for all that the leaders were good at incorporating ideas from the young people, I wasn't sure whether the structure allowed for enough room to adapt the rhythm or style of the work.</p> <p><i>(Please rate the event overall, taking into account your ratings for each section. Please state the key reasons for your overall ratings – i.e. the particular strengths and weaknesses. If the management of the event affects the overall enjoyment of the event, please comment, but the overall rating should be based on the artistic merit of the event.)</i></p>			
Name:	Stephen Stenning	Date:	16 th August 2009
Specialist Advisor			

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named above. It has been prepared by either a specialist Advisor, or an officer of the Scottish Arts Council, as indicated on the form. The report will be circulated to the organisation which produced the work and to the management of the venue, if the venue is core funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

The report will form evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework and be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to future applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council. It may also be used by the Joint Board to report on the overall performance of its funded organisations.

Evaluators should enter their rating under each section, explaining briefly their reason for the rating with reference to their comments under each section. Ratings should be given in accordance with the following:

- Very poor**- standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- Poor** - not well conceived and executed
- Satisfactory**
- Good** - well conceived and executed
- Very Good** – well conceived and executed to a very good standard
- Excellent** – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally high standard

1. Artistic Assessment

Please evaluate the artistic quality of the event, with particular reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the following:

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	Good	<p>The course is a week long with a studio production at the end of it, as a way of sharing the groups work with friends and family. The day I attended they were heavily focussed on rehearsing the piece. The piece had been based on a structure and an idea that the leaders had in advance of the course but had clearly been developed with the young people. The format is one that is very often used and can lead to very formulaic pieces but it was very clear that the talented leaders were working hard to be receptive to ideas coming from the group. The pieces that were being worked on were not venturing into interesting new areas for youth theatre nor were they hugely imaginative. In fact, they could be said to be fairly simplistic and naïve but the important thing was that they were very clearly providing a good vehicle for working on the groups skills and development; they were firing the imagination of the young people and they allowed for a good deal of input from the group.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	Good	<p>It is a part of SYT's Summer Festival. The Summer Festival offers Junior Courses for 8 – 11 year olds (including the one I saw in Glasgow and others in Edinburgh and Aberdeen). Two week long Foundation Courses for 12 – 15 year olds (again taking place in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen) and then a three week Intermediate Course for 14 – 16 year olds, a five week Technical Theatre Course for 14 – 21 year olds and a five week Performance and Production Course (all delivered in Glasgow. This provision clearly offers what the target audience is looking for as the courses are very popular. The summer programme also offers a clear structure of courses for those who wish to follow them through. It is difficult to judge how much it feels like a “festival” to the young people that I was with who were on a one week course but one of the many good things about SYT's space is that there is a good deal of hanging out space providing opportunities for young people involved in the different courses to meet up.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed 	Good	<p>The course information states very clearly that SYT seek to develop creativity & performance skills whilst also recognising the importance of “each individual's personal and social development”. That dual emphasis is very obvious and clearly understood by the very</p>

¹ Education is a bridge between artform excellence and increased access and participation, and it is people centred. Providing opportunities for learning and progressing in an artform or using an artform to address other, non-artistic, outcomes are equally valid; in either case a high quality strategic approach is required in order to benefit the participants and the organisation. Delivery can be through workshops, post/pre-show discussions, outreach work, etc aimed at any age group.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	material? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well did it communicate the artistic themes? • How did the event originate eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? Education events – see ¹ below for definition		dedicated and enthusiastic team who deliver the course. The young people I saw were very committed and self-motivated and that made the job much easier as it was relatively easy to focus on performance skills whilst giving a certain amount of attention to the individuals needs. There was also a sense of it being a tried and tested formula understood by the young people and by the delivery team, but it made be wonder whether there were additional and different approaches that could use the talents of the team and the wonderful resources to offer a wider range of courses.
All	Performers/tutors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. • How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? • In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	Very Good	The course I witnessed was led by SYT Assistant Director Fraser McLeod and included a dance specialist, drama specialist and a music specialist as well as two young helpers. The young team was very impressive for their commitment and energy but also for the sensitivity they used in all dealings with the young people. Their was a very impressive sense of focus and discipline in all the work that I witnessed and that atmosphere was maintained without compromising the sympathetic and receptive approach of the leaders to the young people.
	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work original? • How was the space used? • How many dancers were there and how were they used? • How long was the piece? 	Satisfactory	Simple dance and movement was well used to warm-up and focus the young people and then simple routines were used within the performance pieces. The routines were not very adventurous, the movements were quite elemental but the young people were very comfortable with what they were asked to do and did it with a good deal of commitment.
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 	Satisfactory	The pieces did not really involve scripts as such, but the leaders gave structure to the performances and used the ideas and the previous improvisations to create a script. The leaders made this system work and their willingness to work in new ideas was particularly impressive. The dramatic situation for both pieces, and the original ideas behind the pieces were rather dimensional and although they had interesting starting points they did not do a lot with them.
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	Good	In both cases the leaders directed their groups in rehearsal very effectively. I watched the technical rehearsals which are always taxing for young performers because it is unseen technical issues that drive the proceedings. The leaders had helped the groups to a very clear understanding of the pieces they were working on and their individual roles within it. They were also skilled at clearly articulating what the performers were aiming at in rehearsal.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	Good	Again the music specialist worked well with the group. He had worked with the directors of the pieces to create some song and in the rehearsal of the songs. Songs and vocal exercises were

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			also included in warm-ups and the music specialist led those very confidently. The music seemed to cleverly integrated into the performances.
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 	Good	I In the context of informal performances at the end of week long courses there was understandably not a designer. However, the leaders and SYT's technical staff had worked together in order to ensure that some impressive props were created for the pieces and the resources of the building were used well to create sets for the pieces.
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so how many? • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the 	Very Good	The work was obviously well judged for the group and for the abilities within it. One got the impression that the cost of the course, whilst not hugely expensive, ensured a committed and enthusiastic group. It is clear from the obvious popularity of the courses, that SYT are aware of their target market. The main judge of the quality of the engagement was that the young people were obviously enjoying the course and were certainly engaged in the work and to an extent inspired by it. There was also a good deal of support that enhances the experience for the young people they work with music and movement specialists with the additional support of the technical department and from older SYT members. The literature suggests that support is available for individuals with specific needs although nobody, on the course that I witnessed appeared to need any individual support in order to access the course.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	project? Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?		

2. Management of Event

Please evaluate the way the event was presented/organised by the organisation and the venue, with reference to the checklist below, including additional comments/observations. Please try to view the venue and the services, and interpretative material as though you had never visited it before eg if you did not know the venue's location, how easy would it be to find your way there, and to find your way around once you had arrived?

Criteria	Comment								
Location and suitability of the venue for the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? Are the spaces clean? What were the sight lines like? How big was it? 	The venue is ideal and very obviously built for purpose. It is a lovely space well-thought out for youth theatre providing a great environment to work in.								
Information/ interpretive material at venue– <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	There is a brochure about the Spring and Summer Festivals which had been widely distributed. SYT's website also has information.								
Publicity/ pre-publicity – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? What publicity materials are produced? Is it easy to understand? Where can you get the information? Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>Although the information is easy to come by there is not much detail about the content of courses and there appears to be an assumption that the only information they need to give is when and how much.</p> <p>The SAC is acknowledged in the brochure.</p>								
Ease of booking and payment	n/a								
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	The classes run from 9.30 to 16.00 and that seemed ideal.								
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	All the internal signage is excellent and immediately outside the venue there were temporary signs.								
Access and provision for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event <p>Please add in any additional</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>no</td> <td>Audio description of</td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	no	Audio description of	n/a
	Yes/No		Yes/No						
BSL interpretation	no	Audio description of	n/a						

² In press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, company's website, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising, recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc.) Where the event is publicised in the programme brochure of another organisation (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

Criteria	Comment			
comments below the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 			performances	
	Captioning	n/a	Lift/ramp	Yes
	Accessible toilets	yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	No
Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	The staff in the building was helpful and knowledgeable.			

3. Organisation's Comments (optional)

This is the organisation's opportunity to respond to points raised within this assessment. Please do not feel obliged to fill this section in. In the spirit of the Quality Framework, we would ask that any comments are self-evaluating, providing an insight as to why, if there is, a major disagreement of response between the organisation and the evaluation, in a constructive way.

This will not alter the rating given by the assessment, but will allow the organisation the opportunity to give their opinion/feedback. The Scottish Arts Council reserves the right to edit comments if they are deemed to be libellous or defamatory.

As the Scottish Arts Council implements the Quality Framework internally, we intend to publish artistic evaluations on organisations that we support regularly on our website. The final artistic evaluation, including the organisation's response will be published on a quarterly basis on our website.

Please keep your response to max 500 words. If we do not hear from you in 15 days, we will assume that you do not want to respond.