



### 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:** Brian Cox Studio, SYT Building  
**Title of Event:** The Puddock and the Princess  
**Type of Event:** Performance  
**Date of Visit:** Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2009

**Overall Rating:**

*(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.)*

**VERY GOOD**

*The Puddock and the Princess was a wonderful re-telling of the fairytale, *The Frog Prince*. The performance was pitched at 3-7 year olds, which, in my view, was the right age range for this production. The performance was well performed and directed and the set design by Fin McLay was ingenious.*

Name: **WENDY NIBLOCK**  
Scottish Arts Council Officer

Date: **11/01/10**

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"> <li>Quality of ideas</li> <li>if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons</li> </ul>	GOOD	<p>I have not seen SYT perform before. The performance was clear and well performed by a cast of three non-professional actors – two of whom are senior members of SYT.</p> <p>It is my view the piece was imaginative and was pitched at the right level for its intended age group (3-7 years).</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation?</li> <li>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</li> </ul>	VERY GOOD	<p><i>SYT gives young people in Scotland the opportunity to explore and to reach their creative potential through a quality theatre arts experience. Through training, it offers young people an opportunity to perform in quality performances.</i></p> <p>Given what I saw of this performance, it is my view that SYT fulfilled this aim well.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material?</li> <li>How well did it communicate the artistic themes?</li> <li>How did the event originate e.g. from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	VERY GOOD	<p>The strapline on the publicity material was that the performance was ‘an accessible and engaging adventure for ages 3-7 and all the family’.</p> <p>Given the integration of the performers from the outset, I found the piece completely ‘accessible’ and ‘engaging’. The audience that I saw it with was mainly 3 year olds (and younger). They were gripped and captivated by the performance.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments.</li> <li>How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience?</li> <li>In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>	GOOD	<p>Two of the performers, Jayne Austin and Philip Napier, were SYT senior youth theatre members. The other cast member, Fiona Manson, is a drama tutor with SYT and from what I gather a student at RSAMD. In particular, the two youth theatre members exuded confidence in their performance.</p> <p>SYT must be applauded for allowing these young performers an opportunity to gain a quality experience.</p>

<sup>1</sup> 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
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the work original?</li> <li>• How was the space used?</li> <li>• How many dancers were there and how were they used?</li> <li>• How long was the piece?</li> </ul>	N/A	N/A. There was no programme so I am not sure if a choreographer was part of the creative team. However, from watching the performance, I do not think that choreography was necessary.
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new work</li> <li>• second productions</li> <li>• classics where the original has been substantially changed</li> </ul>	GOOD	The story was coherent and engaging. As already mentioned, there was no programme so I am unsure who adapted this version. Given the age range of its intended audience, the story worked well and, in my opinion, was pitched at just the right level to keep this young audience entertained.  This was done with confidence.
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the work well interpreted?</li> <li>• Was it well cast?</li> <li>• Was it well presented?</li> </ul>	GOOD	Direction by Mary McCluskey (SYT's Artistic Director) was confident and well paced. She made the story very clear for her young audience.  Two of the cast were senior members of the youth theatre. SYT is committed to offering them a quality performing experience. From what I saw, this was evident in this performance. The two young cast members shone and performed with confidence.  Overall, I thought the performance was well executed.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>• Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>	N/A	Recorded music was used to complement the production, made up from film soundtracks.
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were the costumes, set and lighting?</li> <li>• How did it work in the venue?</li> <li>• Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>	VERY GOOD	The design was beautiful. Full credit to Fin McLay as I subsequently found out that he worked on a very limited budget. In my view this did not show. The set included a fountain, which added to the overall aesthetics.  Both the foyer and the Brian Cox studio were used for the performance. The foyer was turned into the Queen's bedroom, which worked wonderfully.
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience?</li> <li>• Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants?</li> <li>• Were you/ engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired?</li> <li>• What was their response?</li> <li>• Approximately how many people were there?</li> <li>• Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled?</li> <li>• Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the run/tour/? If so</li> </ul>	VERY GOOD	I liked the idea of the young audience playing an integral part of the story. From the outset, the children were taught a song, making them feel comfortable straight away. I saw it with a very young audience – around 20 people in total (including adults).  Although the performance was aimed at 3-7 years olds, it would have been good to see it with slightly older children as part of the audience. I think the performance would have benefited from having a mixture of its intended age group as the cast had to work very hard. However, all three cast members embraced the challenge of keeping their young audience entertained.  Overall, I thought the young audience members were captivated and engaged throughout the performance. In particular two little girls joined in at every opportunity, which was lovely to watch, as they got very excited at parts.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>how many?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Were these targeted at specific age groups?</li> </ul> <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred?</li> <li>• What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix?</li> <li>• Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning &amp; Development</li> <li>• What learning/skills development took place?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the art produced by the participants?</li> <li>• Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project?</li> <li>• How were participants recruited?</li> <li>• Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</li> </ul> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		<p>I was not aware of any BSL performances/captioned performances as part of the run.</p>

## 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
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it easy to find?</li> <li>• Is it on a main transport route?</li> <li>• Are the spaces clean?</li> <li>• What were the sight lines like?</li> <li>• How big was it?</li> </ul>	<p>SYT is a city centre venue and is easy to find. The Brian Cox studio was a suitable choice of venue. The capacity for this performance was set for around 60. There were probably around 20 people when I saw it.</p> <p>There were no problems with sight lines.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event?</li> <li>• Is there information on the venue's website?</li> </ul>	<p>I thought it was disappointing that SYT had not prepared a programme for the adults to read. However, one of the staff members was very helpful and provided a cast list.</p> <p>Posters and fliers were on display at the reception and in the foyer.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in?</li> <li>• What publicity materials are produced?</li> <li>• Is it easy to understand?</li> <li>• Where can you get the information?</li> <li>• Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>?</li> </ul> <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>Posters and fliers were on display in the building - all contained SAC accreditation. SAC logo is also prominent on the homepage of its website.</p> <p>I was aware of listings information in the List magazine.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>SYT used the Tron Theatre to act as their booking agent. Booking was easy and my ticket was at the SYT building for collection on the day.</p>
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?</li> <li>• Was the length appropriate?</li> </ul>	<p>The performance lasted one hour, which I thought was the right length of time for a young audience.</p> <p>I saw an afternoon performance (1.30pm), which might explain a quieter audience in terms of numbers.</p>
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the entrance clearly marked?</li> <li>• Is there clear internal directional signage?</li> <li>• Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops?</li> </ul>	<p>Signage was fine.</p>

<sup>2</sup> 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																			
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event</li> </ul> <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue?</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 181 1251 707"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 181 823 253"></th> <th data-bbox="828 181 916 253">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="920 181 1145 253"></th> <th data-bbox="1150 181 1251 253">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 259 823 353">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="828 259 916 353">NO</td> <td data-bbox="920 259 1145 353">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1150 259 1251 353">NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 360 823 432">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="828 360 916 432">NO</td> <td data-bbox="920 360 1145 432">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1150 360 1251 432">YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 439 823 707">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="828 439 916 707">YES</td> <td data-bbox="920 439 1145 707">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1150 439 1251 707">Not aware of any.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	NO	Audio description of performances	NO	Captioning	NO	Lift/ramp	YES	Accessible toilets	YES	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	Not aware of any.
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<p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)</li> <li>If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?</li> </ul>	<p>The staff were friendly and efficient.</p>																			

**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.