



## 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:** Stellar Quines

**Venue:** Assembly Rooms

**Title of Event:** The Girls of Slender Means

**Type of Event:** Drama/Theatre

**Date of Visit:** 18th August 2009

**Overall Rating:** Satisfactory

*(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.)*

**Good adaptation of a novel by Muriel Spark presented at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. It was a satisfactory production with elements of multi media projections together with some interesting staging devices, which at times were handled rather heavily and some adequate performances from an ensemble working well together.**

Name: Alan Lyddiard  
Scottish Arts Council Specialist Advisor

Date: 23rd August 2009

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	Vision and imagination of work <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>	Satisfactory	Good adaptation of an interesting novel.  Never seen any work by the company before.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <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>	Good	Good choice of programming at the Assembly rooms neatly playing alongside The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie and a antidote to some of the other shows
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <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 eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	Good	Very clear and well presented descriptions of the piece in all media outlets.  The artistic themes were extremely well presented.
All	Performers/tutors <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>	Very Good	A good ensemble of performers with obviously some strong parts for a number of women.  One the whole the performances were of high quality from a mixture of young and very experienced performers. I was sometimes a little taken aback by the 'West End' style of acting, but that seem to be the 'style' of the production.
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>	Good	Good choreography and 'mis en scene'. The use of the choreographed moving screens became a little tedious.
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>	Very Good	Very good new adaptation of a novel by Muriel Spark.

<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
Theatre, Dance	<b>Direction</b> <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>	Satisfactory	Well interpreted, very well cast and well presented. Slightly old fashion but it was a period piece so I think it was justified
Dance, Theatre	<b>Use of music</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>	Good	Music was good gently supporting the play. It was recorded
Dance, Theatre	<b>Design</b> <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>	Good	Costumes were excellent and design and lighting was strong. Technically proficient but I was concerned that the projected images were not always clear as to their intention.
All	<b>Quality of Public Engagement</b> 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 how many?</li> <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> Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate): <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</li> </ul>	Good	<p>I think the production was targeted at a traditional theatre going public. The audience I witnessed were a majority of middle aged, white woman. That would seem to be the audience that it was aimed at.</p> <p>I think the audience were engaged but I don't think they were particularly inspired.</p> <p>The Assembly's largest venue was full on the lower level. Maybe 400 people. A few people walked out during the production. I think this is quite normal for a Fringe Festival show.</p> <p>I was not aware of any BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered.</p> <p>Not aware of any education or outreach work but I believe the company works on a number of women's projects.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	structure and content of the 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"> <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>	The venue is a well-established Fringe venue.  it is easy to find, is on main transport routes, is clean with good site lines and impressively decked out for a temporary venue for theatre.
Information/ interpretive material at venue— <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>	Very good poster and publicity material
Publicity/ pre-publicity – <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>	I was aware of the performance from a range of posters, websites and newspaper articles. It was well publicised. It was very easy to understand the information about the production was easily accessible and the funding from Scottish Arts Council was credited fully.
Ease of booking and payment	Very easy to book
Timing of the event <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>	Perfect time of the day for performances
Signage and signposting <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</li> </ul>	Easy access and clearly marked. I did not see Braille signage or wheelchair access.

<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																			
signage for audio loops?																				
<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"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 226 820 293"></th> <th data-bbox="825 226 916 293">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="920 226 1161 293"></th> <th data-bbox="1166 226 1257 293">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 300 820 394">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="825 300 916 394">No</td> <td data-bbox="920 300 1161 394">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1166 300 1257 394">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 400 820 472">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="825 400 916 472">No</td> <td data-bbox="920 400 1161 472">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1166 400 1257 472">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 479 820 748">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="825 479 916 748">yes</td> <td data-bbox="920 479 1161 748">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1166 479 1257 748">Yes</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	Yes
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BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of performances	No																	
Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes																	
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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 are all very helpful. I heard one usher go and help a customer to find out information on a show in another venue.</p> <p>I am not aware of the facilities for disabled customers.</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.