



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

It should be noted the views expressed in this evaluation are intended to represent, as far as possible, an objective aesthetic judgement. Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences.

Artist/Company: Licketyspit

Venue: Traverse Theatre

Title of Event: Heelie go Leerie

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 12.04.2008

Overall Rating: Excellent

Heelie go Leerie is a very lively, engaging, vibrant, interesting show for family audiences. Children from 3 years upwards as well as siblings and parents, were well engaged throughout the whole performance, not an easy feat. HGL would be an excellent, first theatre experience for a child. A “play about play...”, artistic themes included play, imagination, creativity, friendship, and faith... engaging on verbal, physical, visual and intellectual levels for both children and adults.

Name: Tim Licata

Date: 18 / 04 / 2008

Specialist Advisor

Please circle the relevant title

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 at the end of 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 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:

- 1 - **Very Poor** – standard falls well below what is acceptable.
- 2 - **Poor** – not attaining acceptable standards of conception or presentation.
- 3 - **Competent** – routine rather than especially interesting.
- 4 - **Good** – well conceived and executed
- 5 - **Excellent** – conceived and executed to a 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 - Quality of ideas, skills in execution; if you've seen the work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on the comparison.	Good	Vision and imagination were good. Director, Virginia Radcliffe states in programme notes that Heelie go Leerie (HGL) is, <i>"A play about play... inspired by the way children play and... continue to play... no matter what difficulties they may be experiencing."</i> An important and relevant theme in a society that too often discourages imaginative play after a certain age. HGL incorporates other themes; friendship, loneliness, faith, environmental themes. Ideas and themes brought to life in very engaging manner. Very well conceived and executed. This is the first time I have seen the company's work.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned. If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.	Good	Artist led, produced by Licketyspit. The choice of theme and material in the devising of HGL seemed a very relevant topic for children and families in today's society. From programme notes it was apparent the devising and development period included outreach work with primary schools and that children were involved in the development of ideas, songs and text for the production.
All	Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes. Education events – see ¹ below for guidance	Good	HGL was a successful production. Programme and publicity material states that HGL is, <i>"An irresistible exuberant, new play for children and their families [which] ...celebrates the riches of childhood and the energy, wit and tenacity of children."</i> HGL definitely fulfilled this description. HGL was very engaging for the family audience at this presentation. HGL would be an excellent first theatre experience for a child. Artistic themes of imaginative play, friendship and faith well communicated. Some other themes, (environmental, social) slightly less clear, but present in the characters' journeys.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Excellent	Professional, energetic, very engaging performers. Good technical & performance skills. Excellent abilities to communicate and engage their audience, both young children and adults.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Excellent	Christine Devaney's choreography was excellent. Choreography physicalized and brought ideas / themes to life in energetic, playful, and interesting ways. The interesting set was extremely well used by the choreography, all possibilities exploited. Varied, athletic and interesting cont... throughout; movement only repeated with

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
			purpose. The choreography well captured the exuberance and unselfconscious creativity of childhood.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	Script by Virginia Radcliffe. Programme notes that HGL “is VR’s seventh new play for Early Years Audiences in Scotland since 2001. Script development is also credited to Sean Hay, Zinnie Harris, Matthew Zajac and the company. Children and teachers from several primary schools and nurseries are also identified as contributing to the development of ideas and some poems in the performance. In particular, A Witch likes to Eat and A Witch and a Bat were created with specific children from specific nurseries. The story was good, lively, interesting, imaginative and engaging. The text was good; language was simple in a good, straightforward way for children, yet nicely challenging, using rhymes and strong use of rhythmical speech. Interesting for children and adults. At times the structural development of the story seemed jumpy, slightly confusing, though I figured everything out. The climactic ending of the story, was visually very good, but seemed slightly unfinished from the text point of view. Verbal text was well integrated with physicality and movement, also in terms of story construction (physicality, images were part of the story). Good use of text, challenging and appropriate for young audience’s.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Direction by Virginia Radcliffe, also author, was very good. Good casting, very clear communication and interpretation of the ideas / themes in the story, while cloaking them in an enjoyable, imaginative tale. Very well staged, very good use of the set. The direction seamlessly brought together all elements of the production; design and music and choreography. From programme notes and website information, it seems that HGL had a very collaborative element in its development, involving writers, performers as well as nursery children. It seems a strength of VR to inspire, coordinate and integrate all of these elements.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Excellent	Musical Director, Tim Brinkhurst, created an excellent musical accompaniment to HGL. Bright and exuberant.
Dance, Theatre	Design – costume, set, lighting. Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule.	Excellent	Set/Costume design by Ali Maclaurin was excellent. Ali created a simple yet complex, self contained environment for the environment of the story, also allowing for transformation into the many imaginative environments created by the characters. Using simple materials (varied levels, barrels, doorframes etc., Ali created a set with many nooks and crannies to be exploited by the characters imagination. Set allowed many

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			possibilities for the performers, director and choreographer. Excellent lighting design by Jeanine Davies was colourful, dramatic and effective. Costumes were appropriate and effective. Set appropriate for touring venues.
All	<p>Quality of Presentation/Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts - Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang</p> <p>Education events - relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre.</p>	Excellent	High technical standards. Excellent technical presentation.
All	<p>Audience</p> <p>Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction</p> <p>Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors’ books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit</p> <p>Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc</p>		Approximately 150 audience, about 2/3 full, max. capacity 216 seats. Audience was made up of children and adults, majority seemed to be families. Ages from 3yrs upwards. I believe the show is aimed at children and families from 3 upwards, so the audience was perfect. I took my 3 year old to the show with me and he was captivated throughout the piece.
All	<p>Additional Interpretative activity – what activities were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist’s talks, discussion groups? Please indicate age-groups targeted.</p>	Good	The programme offered an interactive activity for children, colouring and cutting out of character figures from the show. Very nice. Company had crayons available for children to use in lobby after performance. Many children did this. Programme states, <i>“Along with the show we are collecting children’s favourite games, rhymes and songs, remembered and invented, to put into a Healie Big Book. All children are invited to send in writing or pictures for inclusion in the book.”</i> Children’s artwork which had been sent in was part of lobby display. The company has produced books and CDs for past productions and this seems to be a good, well thought out, part of their process for young audiences.
All	<p>Outcomes of education activity – what learning/skills development took place? What did participants take away with them? Are education resources being provided for follow up work? Is it strategically linked to the curriculum (formal or informal)?</p>	NA	Evaluated performance. I do not know about education activities associated with HGL.

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
Suitability of the venue for the event	The Traverse was a technically good venue for this production, though perhaps slightly intimidating for very young audience members. This was addressed by the company with friendly pre-show interaction of the cast.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Good lobby display with photos and interpretive drawings sent back to the company by children who had seen the show. This was very nice. Very nice programme with show information and HGL character cut outs which could be coloured by children and made into stick puppets. Seemed a slight printing problem with programme reproduction; (fuzziness). But programme layout and content very nice. Many children were colouring them after the show. Some rhymes from the show included in programme. Unfortunate that programme mis-identified one of the actors. (Not referring to Annie Grace, who had to be replaced due to injury)
Publicity/ pre-publicity – leaflets, posters, websites, etc. What is produced, is it easy to understand and where can you get the information? Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.	High Quality, colourful leaflets and posters. Well designed, with clear information. Good information on company's website. Normal publicity avenues used. Very good interactive programme with cut-outs for children.
Ease of booking and payment	Good.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Good. Traverse easily accessible by public transportation.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	Good.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Good. Elevator for disabled access. Disabled toilets available.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good. Appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Fine, professional.

Criteria	Comment
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC was acknowledged by logo on publicity materials and website. Slight problem with quality of reproduction of logo on programme, but legible.

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.

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.