



Scottish **Arts** Council

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: The Tron, Education and Outreach with the Elephant in the Room and the Wee Giant Puppet Company

Venue: The Tron

Title of Event: The Tron Summer School (ages 12-16)

Type of Event: *(e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc) workshops and performance*

Date of Visit: 7/08/07 and 10/08/07

Overall Rating: Good

(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.)

This weeklong summer school provided the young participants access to a broad range of performance skills (drama, animation and puppetry). The emphasis on encouraging the participants to devise their own material resulted in an imaginative, committed and entertaining final performance.

I felt that the workshop that I observed at times seemed to lack a sense of structured development.

Name: Rebecca Robinson Date: 10 / 08 / 07

Specialist Advisor x Scottish Arts Council Officer *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. | Excellent | This intensive weeklong drama, animation and puppetry summer school culminated in a performance based on a story devised by the participants during the course. The combination of different performance techniques provided the participants access to a broad range of skills. The emphasis on encouraging the participants to devise their own material resulted in an imaginative, committed and entertaining final performance. Although I felt that the w/shops could have been structured to establish and develop more basic drama skills, overall I thought that this was an excellent opportunity for the participants to experience the creative process of devising and performing their own show. |
| 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. | Excellent | This is the first year that the Tron Education and Outreach programme have offered weeklong drama summer schools based in the Tron's 'Changing House'. The summer school complements and develops the programme of weekly workshops for young people that already run throughout the year, both at the Tron and as outreach opportunities. The summer school for 12-16 year olds combined drama, puppetry and animation led by the Tron's Education and Outreach department, in collaboration with Elephant in the Room (EitR) and the Wee Giant Puppet Company (WGPC). The combination of these different workshop leaders provided an excellent introduction to different performance skills. |
| | | | |
| 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 below for guidance | Excellent | The website blurb stated that the summer school aimed to allow participants to explore their "imagination and get lost designing and building (their) own characters then bring them to life". I felt that the summer school did meet this aim – participants had the opportunity for focussed imaginative exploration and involvement in the process of designing and creating additional visual elements (puppets and animation) for performance. |

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 |
|----------------|--|-----------|---|
| All | Performers/tutors -technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments. | Good | The Tron's Education and Outreach officer, Lisa McIntosh assisted by Gillian Crawford, led the morning drama session that I observed. The emphasis of the session was on the devising process and exercises/ improvisations were focussed on developing the story -both narratively and dramatically -that the participants had created in previous sessions. Exercises were clearly explained and energy levels and focus were relatively well maintained throughout the session. However, I felt that the drama session was sometimes overly repetitive and focussed on the final performance rather than the process itself (e.g. participants were encouraged to repeat exercises (e.g. tableau images and unstructured improvisations). I also wasn't always clear about who (LM or GC) was leading the exercises. The afternoon session was led by puppeteer Andy Gaukel and Michael Collins (animation). AG was very good at giving the participants constant feedback and being aware of their levels of engagement, although this session – learning about manipulating the puppet-was the most technical and, I felt, AG did have to struggle, by the end, to hold the participants attention. The participants seemed to be involved in the creation of the final puppet through their ideas rather than through 'hands on' work. MC led the participants clearly through the sophisticated process of producing animations – with the children designing and producing images to be used for the final performance. Participants appeared to be highly engaged in this session. |
| Dance, Theatre | Choreography/Use of choreography -originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc | N/a | |
| Theatre | Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed. | Good | The script was very appropriate based as it was on the young people's improvisations. The participants created an imaginative and engaging story, which was easy to follow, but also had depth. |
| Theatre, Dance | Direction -Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation. | Excellent | The devised material was well structured to create a clear and very entertaining storyline, which was imaginatively staged with good use being made of all the available resources. All of the participants appeared to be highly committed and contributed equally to the final performance |
| Dance, Theatre | Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production. | Good | The pre-recorded music used for the performance was very appropriate and well chosen. |

| Artform | Criteria | Rating | Comments and key reasons for rating |
|----------------|---|---------------|--|
| 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. | Good | The lighting for the performance was simple but effective. The participants wore their own clothes and the use of simple props (bags, sleeping bags, torches, chairs, etc) helped add to the easy naturalism of the piece. |
| All | Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts -technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). Crafts/Visual Arts -Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang Education events -relevance/ appropriateness of presentation and teaching methodology (one to one, group, child centred); details of participant group and activity, including genre. | Good | There were ten participants (6 girls and 4 boys) involved in the workshop and performance. The w/shop that I observed was all based on group work with an emphasis on encouraging the participants to generate drama/ puppetry/ animation material to be used for the final performance. |
| All | Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction Crafts/Visual Arts – time spent, interest, activity, and visitors’ books comments, number of visitors/ participants at the time of visit Education/learning – pre-event involvement, participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc | | Approximately 50 family and friends attended the final performance on the Friday afternoon in the Changing House. All appeared to thoroughly enjoy the performance. |
| All | 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. | N/a | |
| All | 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)? | Good | Skills developed included: how the process of animation works, storyboarding, manipulation of puppets, team working, how to devise, develop and combine different performance techniques (i.e. drama, animation and puppetry), individual and group performance experience. . |

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 Tron's 'Changing House' seemed an appropriate venue with good facilities for both the workshop and performance. |
| Information/ interpretive material at venue -programmes, displays etc. | N/a |
| 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. | The summer school was advertised on the Tron, Elephant in the Room and Wee Giant Puppets' websites. All the websites contained basic information about the workshop and times and gave contact details for further information. The summer school was also advertised in The List, SeeGlasgow and other local media. |
| Ease of booking and payment | N/a |
| Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? | The Tron is in the centre of Glasgow and is easy to access by public and private transport. |
| External signage and signposting | No problem |
| Internal directional signage | No problem – front of house staff directed the audience to the Changing House. |
| Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see? | Seemed to be ok. |
| Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? | The workshop times (daily 10am – 3.30pm, with a 30 minute lunch break) seemed appropriate – allowing the participants enough time to be led through and explore in some depth the workshop themes. I did think that all might have benefited from scheduled breaks. The performance started at 3.30pm and lasted approx 45 minutes. |
| Customer service -quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) | Front of house and bar staff were all friendly and efficient. |
| Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding 2 | The SAC were acknowledged on the web pages of the Tron's website. |

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.