



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: TheatreBo

Venue: Tron Theatre

Title of Event: Grumpy Charlie Can't Come Out to Play

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 15th October 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.)

Good

Grumpy Charlie Can't Come Out to Play was a good first production with an original story premise by TheatreBo. Some of the artistic elements were very good, though in my opinion the production somewhat lacked clarity and consistency in direction. Also in my view the company would benefit from strengthening the inclusive element of their performance.

Name: Magdalena Schamberger

Date: 31st October 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	Vision and imagination of work <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><i>Grumpy Charlie Can't Come Out to Play (Grumpy Charlie)</i> is a charming first production with an original story premise by TheatreBo.</p> <p>The story started off engagingly with Charlie introducing us to his family of grumps existing in a world where grumpiness is good and cabbage is on the daily menu. Awaiting his 7th Birthday party Charlie is expected to participate in what is called 'The Great Grumping' as a sort of coming of age, which involves the eating of smelly cabbage soup. The story revolves around Charlie's attempt to take control of his own fate and avoid the unavoidable cabbage soup.</p> <p>The quality of the individual artistic ideas of <i>Grumpy Charlie</i> was good however their execution varied and ranged from very good to satisfactory. Overall, in my view, the production lacked clarity and consistency in direction.</p>
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <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. 	Satisfactory	<p>TheatreBo is according to its programme, "a brand new Scotland base company dedicated to creating original, inclusive world class touring theatre for children."</p> <p>The story of <i>Grumpy Charlie</i> was original and good, however the inclusive element of the show was in my opinion under developed.</p>
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? • 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? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	Good	<p><i>Grumpy Charlie</i> succeeded in being "an epic adventure about one boy's desire not to eat stewed cabbage and to have his 7th birthday party."</p> <p>The story incorporated some modern storytelling elements with more old-fashioned mythological themes ('The Book of Grumps' laying out the rules of the land; the succession of kings, etc).</p> <p><i>Grumpy Charlie</i> communicated its artistic themes sufficiently well.</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
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? 	Good	<p><i>Grumpy Charlie</i> was performed by Ewan Donald (ED) and Patricia Kavanagh (PK). ED's performance as Grumpy Charlie and Storyteller was very good. Patricia Kavanagh (PK) was good in a variety of roles. Quite a few of the characters she portrayed were male and she seemed to struggle a little to find variety in regard to voice and physical characterisation.</p>
Dance, Theatre	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? 	N/A	
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 	Good	<p><i>Grumpy Charlie</i> is a new piece of work. The script by writer and director Steve Collins was good. The story premise of the 'Great Grumping' and some of the story ideas were original and the idea of starting the story in the past and developing it via the present into the future was interesting. In my opinion parts of the text and storyline went into too much detail. I felt the story was attempting to be too complex and could have been more focused and simplified for this audience. In my view, there was too much language and too many characters.</p>
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	Satisfactory	<p>There were some good ideas by director Steve Collins, such as the speaking book, using a fan as the wind and using a balloon to travel.</p> <p>However overall the production lacked consistency in dramaturgy (by Charlie Fairley) in terms of story development as well as direction in terms of the development and clarity/variety in interpretation of several individual characters. There was also inconsistency in terms of the storyteller: although ED was playing Grumpy Charlie and the Storyteller throughout most of the play, there was one small section where PK took over as storyteller – which seemed unnecessary and did not make sense.</p> <p>In my opinion there were too many characters in the story and SC's direction seemed to struggle at times to find simple and clear conventions to portray them.</p> <p>The ending of the story was slightly disappointing: when Charlie arrived at the end of his epic journey the story fizzled out rather than providing a clear ending. Therefore there was no applause from the audience. Following the end of the story, audience members were invited to look at a picture of Grumpy Charlie in a box – a fine proposal, though the tiny picture was quite underwhelming.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	N/A	
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	<p>The set design by Rebecca Hamilton and lighting design by Ray Love were good and worked well in the venue. The show was technically proficient. The costumes were good, however PK's costume (a short blue dress) did not support her in creating a variety of characters.</p> <p>The set was very inviting and consisted of painted background scenery with an artificial grass floor cloth, which the audience was invited to sit on. This was a very good idea, which however did not prove very versatile. The set was not changed sufficiently through out the performance and the grass proved a slightly odd foreground to a scene in the sandy desert. I found myself wondering if other solutions could have been found. Also Grumpy Charlie's front door had so much 'character' that it slightly dominated all scenes. It was difficult not to focus on it during a variety of scenes at other locations during the remainder of the show.</p>
All	Quality of Public Engagement <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <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? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p>	Very Good	<p>The production was targeted for ages 5+ and was entirely appropriate for this age range.</p> <p>The audience of 30-35 people consisted of a mixture of children and adults who responded very positively to the performance. There was no obvious mixture in terms of cultural diversity and abilities.</p> <p>I was engaged throughout most of the performance. I would have wished for a clearer beginning and end, which may have also resulted in a clearer and more substantial appreciation by the audience in terms of applause.</p> <p>There were no activities or supporting materials available.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<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 project? <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</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"> • 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? 	<p>The Tron Theatre is very easy to find and its spaces are very clean. The performance took place in the studio space and sightlines were good.</p> <p>The only negative and slightly distracting element was the technician, who was quite visible in the intimate studio space and was drinking coffee throughout the first third of the performance.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue–</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? • Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>There were leaflets and programmes available. I was not aware of any posters at the Tron. The performance was listed in the Tron brochure as well as on the Tron website. It was also included in the Inspirations and Wee Inspirations brochures.</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <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 	<p>TheatreBo leaflet, Tron brochure, Tron website, Inspirations as well as Wee Inspirations brochures and The List events.</p> <p>The information was simple and easy to understand.</p> <p>There was no Scottish Arts Council acknowledgment</p>

Criteria	Comment																
<p>information?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>and I assume that there was no SAC support. However the support of the following was acknowledged: Inspirations Festival, Culture & Sport Glasgow and Tron Theatre.</p>																
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>Very easy and straightforward.</p>																
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	<p>The event started and finished on time. The performance was 45 minutes long and the length was very suitable for the target audience.</p>																
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <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? 	<p>Entrances are clearly marked and there is clear internal direction signage. There was no Braille signage or signage for audio loops available.</p>																
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <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 comments below the table</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 875 1252 1402"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 875 823 943"></th> <th data-bbox="823 875 916 943">Yes/ No</th> <th data-bbox="916 875 1163 943"></th> <th data-bbox="1163 875 1252 943">Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 943 823 1043">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="823 943 916 1043">No</td> <td data-bbox="916 943 1163 1043">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1163 943 1252 1043">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1043 823 1122">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="823 1043 916 1122">No</td> <td data-bbox="916 1043 1163 1122">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1163 1043 1252 1122">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1122 823 1402">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="823 1122 916 1402">Yes</td> <td data-bbox="916 1122 1163 1402">Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1163 1122 1252 1402">No</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	No
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<p>Customer service</p> <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? 	<p>Very good and very efficient.</p> <p>There were no disabled customers at the performance I attended.</p>																

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.