



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: Visible Fictions / Children's Theatre of Minneapolis

Venue: Byre Theatre, St. Andrews

Title of Event: Peter Pan

Type of Event: Performance

Date of Visit: 13 March 2009

Overall Rating: Excellent

(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.)

Peter Pan is an excellent, imaginative, lively and very theatrical adaptation by Douglas Irvine of James Barrie's classic. This co-production between Visible Fictions and the Children's Theatre of Minneapolis with Italian shadow artist Fabrizio Montecchi employs excellent movement, theatrical storytelling and lovely shadow puppetry and uses simple props and materials to great effect. All strong performances from a very good ensemble cast. A visually beautiful and well-crafted production.

Name: Tim Licata

Date: 16 / 03 / 2009

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.	Excellent	Peter Pan is Visible fiction's adaptation of James Barrie's classic. Douglas Irvine's strong adaptation focuses on and distils the main and timeless themes of the story, using Barrie's language to strong effect in an enchanting, imaginative and beautifully theatrical production.
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	Peter Pan is a co-production between Visible Fictions and the Children's Theatre of Minneapolis and Fabrizio Montecchi, an Italian shadow artist; rehearsed and first staged in Minneapolis before coming to Scotland with a British cast. I don't know the origins of the co-production. Peter Pan remains an excellent selection as a timeless and relevant story for children. As a possible first introduction to a piece of theatre this production is superb. As part of the Byre programming for young people and family audiences also an excellent choice.
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	Excellent	Aims as taken from programme and publicity materials: To...“bring this modern myth and its much loved characters to life for the stage” To create...“vibrant, high quality and accessible theatre for both young people and adults alike...aiming to challenge, excite and thrill...[guaranteeing] a memorable and powerful experience.” Visible Fictions. “...to create extraordinary theatre experiences and to advance theatre as a means of educating, challenging and inspiring young people (Children's Theatre Co. Minn.)” Peter Pan provided a theatrical experience that well communicated its artistic themes. Successful in all of the above aims.
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	Six actors, most playing multiple roles, appeared as a strong and true ensemble. All professional actors, with excellent performance skills, excellent movement skills, excellent ability to communicate and engage the audience. Jon Paul Rowden very well cast as Peter Pan brought great youthful exuberance to the role. The cast had very good puppetry skills in manipulating the shadow puppets. All created energetic, well-defined three-dimensional characters, all brought emotional depth to the roles where necessary.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Excellent	Choreography in terms of the use of movement to bring the story and characters to life was excellent. Full, imaginative and varied use of the set and stage space, great use of height and space also with shadow puppet play and effects, fun energetic, fun, vibrant swordfight

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
			choreography, also switching seamlessly between actors and shadow puppets. Excellent, varied, dynamic and theatrical use of movement and space.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Excellent	Very good adaptation of (I believe) Barrie's original script by Douglas Irvine, condensing the story and focusing on several rich themes including: growth, change, emotional development, loss, sexual awakening. Strong clear language, strong structuring of the story.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Douglas Irvine's direction was extremely clear, strong, imaginative and theatrical. Everything served to communicate the story and artistic themes of the story. Excellent casting – all very strong. Strong clear three-dimensional interpretations of all characters, strong emotional depth to characters. Excellent staging and use of shadow puppets and shadows as elements of the set through a very strong, successful collaboration with Fabrizio Montecchi. Douglas used all the elements available to him; voice, text, movement, shadow puppetry, stage space, to great effect. Scene changes were well choreographed and integrated into the production. Very good use of shadow puppetry as well as revealing the puppet manipulation in audience's view as part of the show.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Excellent	The music for Peter Pan was excellent and an integral part of the creation of atmosphere, presentation of the story and dynamic of the production. The music appeared specifically written for this production, well fitting the flow of the storytelling. Inexplicably, there was no credit or information about the music or composer in the programme.
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	The stage design and design of the shadow puppets by Fabrizio Montecchi was excellent and of very high quality. The design employed simple materials, a bed platform, poles, sheets of fabric, simple props, to imaginatively suggest and create the environments, atmospheres and landscapes of the play. The shadow puppets and use of shadows were superb. Appropriate to this venue and for touring to a range of 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</p>	Excellent	Excellent professional technical management of the production. Lighting and sound were integral to the performance, especially lighting cues involved in the shadow puppetry. All well done to high professional standard. It was a technically beautiful show.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	of participant group and activity, including genre.		
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>		The Byre was about a third full with an audience of circa 70. About 2/3 children, the rest adults. The show is recommended for 8+ for which it is very appropriate. There were younger children there as well and I felt the show worked well for them too. The audience was raptly engaged throughout, several children gasping at moments of the performance, obviously strongly engaged by the performance and story. Very good reaction from both adults and children, strong applause at the end.
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>	NA	I was not aware of other activities. Performance evaluation.
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	Performance evaluation.

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	Very good and appropriate.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Good marketing display and photographs in the lobby. High quality informative programme free with the show.
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.	Strong well designed posters and flyers of high quality. Listings in all normal press. The company has a good informative website, well designed, easy to navigate.
Ease of booking and payment	Fine.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Centrally located in St. Andrews. If coming from outside St. Andrews the Byre is accessible by public transport; train, then bus or taxi necessary.
External signage and signposting	Would need directions if you didn't know the theatre. There is an external sign, but not large.
Internal directional signage	Fine.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Fine - Lift access to all levels.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	All appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Scottish Arts Council acknowledged on all printed material. Did not see acknowledgement on company website other than on small Peter Pan image on website, hard to distinguish.

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.