



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:	Wee Stories
Venue:	The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen (StudioTheatre)
Title of Event:	One Small Step
Type of Event:	Performance
Date of Visit:	20 October 2007
Overall Rating:	Good

This could quite possibly be the touch paper to ignite the interest in space and the science of astronomy. I, along with the other audience members, enjoyed this show and felt that there were lots of interesting space facts woven into this script. At an hour and a quarter it was a good length of time to engage the young audience members minds and give them some details without overwhelming them with facts, and a good length of time for the older audience members who would have wanted more hard science had the show continued longer. It is a production that keeps to a simple storytelling style, is human and personal, and yet has touches of theatricality and magic, which always helps to catch the imagination of both young and old. I feel there were a few problems with the flow of the performance on the particular night I saw "One Small Step"— and that it lacked a vivacity and sparkle that I felt could very easily be a part of this production... and is perhaps there during other performances.

Name: Alexandria Patience Date: 6 November 2007

Specialist Advisor Scottish Arts Council Officer *Please tick 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	The idea of building a performance piece around space and space travel and the science of it makes a very interesting show that was well received by the audience in Aberdeen. Though there were quite a number of stumbles in the flow of telling the story; this was unfortunate in a show which was full of interesting facts since it made it a little uneasy. I am unsure how established this piece is within the Wee Stories repertoire but the stumbles made it appear to be just a little under rehearsed. This is the second venue/performance in the five venue tour.
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <p>Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	Good	I have no knowledge as to how this event originated but it is advertised as being a part of 'TechFest – SetPoint', and The Educational Institute of Scotland logo appears on the advertising. This is a part of the theatre programme at The Lemon Tree which is predominantly focussed on theatre for children and the young. This show incorporates an interesting challenge within the programme with it's focus on science and educational agenda. I was very happy to see a good sized audience on a Saturday night for this show advertised as for the 8+ age range. The Lemon Tree 'kids' and 'theatre' programme includes Phil Kay for All Ages, Julia Donaldson with her 'The Gruffalo and friends' for 4+, Giant with 'Grubs Up' for 6-9, Shona Reppe with 'Olga Volt' for 5+, Clydebuilt Puppets 'Red Riding Hood's Magic Purse' for 3-7, Mull Theatre with 'Bright Water' for 14+, Theatre Hebrides with 'Callanish Stoned' for 14+, Bird of Paradise 'Beneath You' for 12+, Reeling & Writhing 'Only the Men' for 12+ and dan and Jeff's 'Potted Potter' for 6+.
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	Good	'The beginners guide to the universe' is how the show is advertised and the company as 'uniquely engaging stories which are rooted in storytelling' – I feel the show and the company fulfil these aims with this show. Although an educational show focussed for an youth audience, I feel the portion of the audience who were 'adults' also learnt new things and enjoyed the show.
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	Competent	In other production I have seen by them they have been very good, but as I mentioned earlier there were a few stumbles in lines and in physically moving the props on stage during this performance – even so Iain Johnstone and Andy Cannon are performers who are experienced and well established so managed to recover and continue with little problem. Iain created a strong bond 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
			the audience.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	Competent	No specific choreography but good use of the space physically.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	Script is credited to Andy Cannon, David Trouton & to Iain Johnstone. I am unaware of when this script and production were developed. Script works well with a good balance of humour, fact and audience participation. It also keeps moving to maintain interest.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	Although this was an enjoyable and interesting show on many levels it did seem to me that perhaps a stronger directorial focus could have brought more contrasts to play in the show. A little more freshness and sparkle would have brought this show into the Excellent rating.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	Recorded sound which worked well for the production.
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	This was a fairly simple design, but it all worked very well for the production and still managed to have a little touch of magic. Everything seemed to have a function and yet was light enough to not weigh down the storytelling format and the very direct communication with the audience. It appeared to me this design, in every aspect, could fit into any venue.
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>	Good	Technical presentation was fine with no glitches. The Lemon Tree venue works well for this kind of show since the venue is quite warm and small enough that direct communication can cross from the stage into the audience with ease. Iain and Andy had no problem reaching into the audience and talking directly to them.
All	<p>Audience</p> <p>Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction</p>		The audience numbered approximately 90. It was an attentive audience with more children than adults in attendance but all seemed to enjoy themselves and be engaged throughout. There also appeared to be more boys than girls.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<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>		
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>	N/A	I am unaware of any additional interpretive activities happening in conjunction with the show.
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>	Good	Although as I say above there were no additional educational activities the show itself was built to encourage children to question and to pursue answers. It also gave some facts about space and astronomy. The shows programme gives six questions about space and encourages the child to answer these with a friend as a space QUIZ.

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	Well suited
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Small free programme with basic info on the company, advertising an upcoming show and with a 'Super Space Quiz'
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.	Wee Stories flyer/poster have a good strong image and were in Aberdeen and in The Lemon Tree Magazine and web site - all easy to read and navigate through. Also advertised along with other Lemon Tree theatre/dance events in The Source – a free quarterly events guide for Aberdeen City and Shire. The Aberdeen City Council, Economic Promotion and City Events also produce a map of event locations.
Ease of booking and payment	Easy – advised I didn't need to book and paid at door
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Fairly central
External signage and signposting	Didn't notice sign to direct wheelchairs to side entrance
Internal directional signage	Signage fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Steward has to be present to gain wheelchair access – bell has to be rung at side door to gain entry and then access to first floor venue by elevator.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Appropriate
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Very good
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Yes

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.