



**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.

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b><i>Wee Stories</i></b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b><i>Glasgow Science Centre (part of Inspiration Festival)</i></b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b><i>'One Small Step' – Wee Stories</i></b>
<b>Type of Event:</b> (e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)	<b><i>Performance - Educational</i></b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b><i>30 October 2007</i></b>
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	<b><i>Competent</i></b> <b><i>It impressively got across very complex subjects, presented a great many facts and a great deal of information. It was performed skilfully and the ideas were communicated with a great deal of clarity. That said, the production was not very theatrical and did not use a great deal of imagination in the staging.</i></b>
<i>(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.)</i>	
<b>Name:</b> <b>Stephen Stenning</b>	<b>Date:</b> <b>10 November 2007</b>
<b>Specialist Advisor X</b>	Scottish Arts Council Officer

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.	<b>Competent</b>	<i>I have seen a number of Wee Stories productions and have always been impressed by the imaginative way they bring ideas to the stage. In this case, they found a vehicle for exploring an essentially complex subject and getting across a great deal of information but it was surprisingly un-theatrical. It looked to me like a piece specifically put together for the Imagination Festival but I was assured that it was an off the shelf show that the festival had brought in.</i>
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.	<b>Good</b>	<i>From the point of view of the Imagination festival this was a very good piece to offer and it was staged in the ideal venue for the subject matter.</i>
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 <sup>1</sup> below for guidance	<b>Competent</b>	<i>The aims as they appeared in the on-line blurb were very ambitious – telling the story of the 14 billion year journey from the big bang to walking on the moon. It managed an astonishingly thorough skip through ideas, understandings and historical facts but it did it without really bringing the subject to life.</i>
All	Performers/tutors – technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.  Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	<b>Good</b>	<i>Andy Cannon and Iain Johnstone are extremely accomplished and impressive performers for young audiences. The production relied on their performance skills to communicate complicated stories and ideas with clarity and wit. They had a great deal of information to get across and the fact that they managed to do that, without much in the way of theatrical gimmicks, and without it becoming a lecture was testimony to those skills.</i>
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	<b>N/A</b>	
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	<b>Competent</b>	<i>The script not only sought to explain the developing understanding of the universe across time it also sought to put ideas into their historical and scientific context. Given that there was so much in it, the fact that it was easy to follow and it made sense was a real achievement. The task of covering so much</i>

<sup>1</sup> 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
			<i>ground seemed to leave little room for script ideas to be fully developed.</i>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	<b>Competent</b>	<i>The above applies to this also. I was expecting some imaginative ideas in the presentation of the piece but felt that the pace had to be so relentless in order to get through the material that there was not really room or time.</i>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	<b>Poor</b>	<i>Sound and music was used at times to set the scene and underscore scenes. It may well have been a problem of the room we were in, but in many cases it added little and on at least one occasion the sounds were intrusive and made it hard to give the attention necessary in order to keep up.</i>
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.	<b>Competent</b>	<i>The set was very basic, although functional and, for the most part, appropriate for the style of the piece. Regularly, props and bits of stage furniture were meant to have been ‘knocked up’ in order to explain tricky concepts. Therefore, they were necessarily basic and home-made but there were times when good design ideas could have been better exploited.</i>
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>	<b>Poor</b>	<i>It felt surprisingly under-rehearsed given that the performance I saw came towards the end of the short run. The volume levels for the recorded sound did not seem to have been very carefully set and cues did not appear to be very slick.</i>
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>		<i>The piece was made for its audience and the 100 -150 pupils were attentive and participated when they were invited to do so. It was clear from the reaction that the majority were following and were interested in the information coming across. There was some waning in the attention but the general reaction to it was good.</i>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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.		<i>I am not sure whether there were additional workshops or education packs.</i>
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)?	<b>Good</b>	<i>There was a great deal that could be followed up and I know from talking to teachers that they were well armed with materials to use to follow-up ideas presented in the performance.</i>

## 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	<i>Ideal venue for the piece that they were presenting</i>
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	<i>Obviously, given that it was in the Science Museum, there was a great deal of interpretive material relevant to the show. However as it was a schools performance there wasn't a programme and there were no specific displays.</i>
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.	<i>It wasn't an advertised show rather it was a schools performance arranged as a part of the Inspiration Festival. There was some information on Wee Stories' website, there was also a link to the Science Centre's website but I found it difficult to find any information on that site.</i>
Ease of booking and payment	<i>There were no tickets and I did not need to book.</i>
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	<i>The Science Centre is easy to find and well connected on Glasgow's transport network.</i>
External signage and signposting	<i>The Science centre is well signposted.</i>
Internal directional signage	<i>It was very difficult to find the performance venue within the Science Centre but it was not a public performance.</i>
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	<i>Access to the Science centre is very good there are disabled facilities and they are clearly signposted and easy to find.</i>
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	<i>It was a lunchtime performance for schools and it seemed to suit the schools well.</i>
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	<i>The staff at the venue and the representative of the festival were very helpful.</i>
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding <sup>2</sup>	<i>There were no SAC acknowledgements as far as I could see at the venue. But the Wee Stories website has SAC logos on a number of the pages – including on the education page.</i>

<sup>2</sup> 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.