



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:	Wee Stories/National Theatre of Scotland
Venue:	His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen
Title of Event:	The Emperor's New Kilt
Type of Event:	<i>(e.g. performance, exhibition, informal showing, work-in-progress, workshop, screening, lecture etc)</i>
	Performance
Date of Visit:	10.5.08
Overall Rating:	Excellent
<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>	
This was a clever and engaging version of the traditional story told with imagination and flair. The young audience were enthralled by it. High production values coupled with quirky charm and original theatricality produced an extremely entertaining show.	
Name: Lorna Duguid	Date: 13.5.08
Specialist Advisor	x Scottish Arts Council Officer <i>Please circle the relevant title</i>

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	Wee Stories have a reputation for telling classic stories and fairy tales in a modern and accessible style. This was an excellent example of their work, taking an old story and framing it in such a way that a modern audience can return to it and find the resonances within it. The ideas in this show showed great originality in concept and execution.
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.	good	This was a good show for His Majesty's Theatre to programme to fulfil the demand for shows for children.
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	The programme states “that Wee Stories want to appeal to a wide age group sitting together, multi generational, child inclusive and child friendly but not only for children” This was evidently achieved as the audience here were made up of a wide age range, all of whom seemed to get something out of the performance. They also claim to want to make people think about the more serious themes of the story, about standing up to oppression and questioning the truth. This was achieved in a very light hearted way with the central themes of the story very much to the fore but without nay proselytising.
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	Both musical and acting performances were very good. The performances were relaxed and had great charm and rapport with the audience. There was some great physical comedy too.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	n/a	

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
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	excellent	The script was again charming and witty, with lots of good jokes for all age groups, without being too knowing for the adults or too consciously childish.
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	excellent	The show was well directed and again seemed very relaxed in its performance style. It has the appearance of a show that the performers were so comfortable with they could play around with it and respond to the audience. The framework of a story within another story is one that the company has used before and allows for great flights of imagination, while allowing the audience to feel rooted in reality
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	excellent	Some great original songs and live music added to the performance and produced a music hall/panto feel at times.
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 high production values were evident here- the set was hugely original and produced several comic moments in its own right (including the singing sporrans!) Large sewn/patchwork backcloths worked beautifully to create scenes and although simple in design filled the large stage at his Majesty's very well and gave richness to the design.
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>	excellent	Technically very high standard and production values. Sound in particular was very good.
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,</p>		The stalls seemed about ¾ full. Very appreciative audience.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	participants/ schoolteachers reaction, understanding, commitment, enthusiasm, number involved, etc		
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/k	
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)?	n/k	

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	good
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	good
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.	good
Ease of booking and payment	Internet booking unable to be used due to fault. Booked ticket by phone – very helpful staff
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	yes
External signage and signposting	fine
Internal directional signage	fine
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	good
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	good
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Excellent customer service from front of house staff-very friendly and patient with children.
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.