



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:	Wallacestone Primary School, Polmont.
Title of Event:	BAD KING WENCESLAS
Type of Event:	Theatre
Date of Visit:	16th December 2008
Overall Rating:	Good
<p>This was a piece of good storytelling theatre, full of the kind of shoestring magic that Wee Stories always do so well and so effortlessly. Very simple, very effective and thoroughly engaging.</p>	
<p>Name: Stewart Ennis Date: 16th December 2008 Specialist Advisor</p>	

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 magical simplicity of set, the low-fi music, the clarity of the direction and the characterization all resulted in a magical little show. The fact that this magic was created mostly without the aid of technical wizardry in a primary school hall says a lot for the storytelling prowess of Wee Stories.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.	Excellent	This was an artist led show designed to tour primary schools. The show works extremely well in this environment
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	N/A	There was no programme (all shows are performed in primary schools) and the Wee Stories web site does not have a great deal of information. However this show has (as stated above) has been designed only for performance in primary schools, and so there seems less need of information for the 'general public'. However, it is a very recognizable 'Wee Stories' show, playing to the storytelling strengths associated with this company. This journey-tale was one of good versus evil, of true love winning the day; it was a tale well told.
All	Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage. Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.	Good	Performers Andy Cannon and Ian Johnston were never less than engaging, gliding in and out of a variety of character and narrator roles with charm and ease. They are natural storytellers and seem to require little in the way of bells and whistles to bring their tales alive.
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography - originality, use of space, number and use of dancers, length of piece, etc	N/A	
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	In the absence of a programme (not appropriate at the venue in which I saw this show) or web info, I am assuming that the piece was co-written by Andy Cannon and Iain Johnston. This had the feel of a very familiar fairy tale structure and was firmly placed in the rustic world of 'Once Upon A Time'. Though not short of wit, it was free from incongruous or gratuitous contemporary references and maintained its magic and its integrity throughout.

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, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	Again, an assumption is being made that the show was co-directed by Andy Cannon and Iain Johnston. The direction was lucid, finely paced and un-tricksy; everything felt that it was there to serve the story.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	The two performers both used musical instruments on stage to very good effect, integrating them into the narrative, rather than stopping now and again...to do a 'number'. The music was live, acoustic and well in keeping with the style of the piece, adding atmosphere and narrative drive.
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 simple traverse stage design, with its river running between the two worlds, offered an excellent sense of journey crucial to a show like this. It managed to successfully create real magic in a school hall free of theatrical lights or backdrops.
All	Quality of Presentation/Engagement Performing Arts - technical presentation of the production (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).	Excellent	The show was relatively un-technical but everything was of a consistently high professional standard.
All	Audience Performing Arts - appropriateness of the production for the audience/participants; estimate the size and reaction		Their audience of primary school children appeared enthralled throughout.
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/A	
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/A	

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	This show was designed for primary schools and worked extremely well in this one.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	N/A
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.	N/A There was not much in the way of info on this show on the Wee Stories Web Site.
Ease of booking and payment	N/A This was not a public performance
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	N/A This was not a public performance.
External signage and signposting	N/A This was not a public performance.
Internal directional signage	N/A This was not a public performance.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	I assume that the school have their own policy on this matter.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	The show ran for just under an hour and held the audiences attention throughout.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	N/A This was not a public performance.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	SAC acknowledged on Wee Stories web, but no printed material for this show.

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.