



ARTISTIC EVALUATION

This evaluation is intended to represent an objective aesthetic judgement. **Specialist advisors and officers should avoid making judgements based on their own personal tastes and preferences wherever possible.**

Artist/Company: WEE STORIES

Venue: SOUTH QUEENSFERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Title of Event: SPRING AND THE SELFISH GIANT

Type of Event: PERFORMANCE

Date of Visit: MONDAY 21ST DECEMBER 2009

Overall Rating:

(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.)

VERY GOOD

Wee Stories' *Spring and the Selfish Giant* was a joy to watch from start to finish. A Scottish re-telling of Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*, it was co-adapted by Wee Stories' co-creative directors, Andy Cannon and Iain Johnstone.

In my view, Cannon is a natural storyteller and a charismatic performer. Both he and the other performer, Emma Snellgrove, had the children (P1 to P7) completely mesmerised and engrossed throughout the performance.

Name: WENDY NIBLOCK
Scottish Arts Council Officer

Date: 26th January 2010

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 on 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 future 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:

Very poor- standard falls well below what is acceptable.

Poor - not well conceived and executed

Satisfactory

Good - well conceived and executed

Very Good – well conceived and executed to a very good standard

Excellent – Inspiring and executed to an exceptionally 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	<p>Vision and imagination of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of ideas if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons 	VERY GOOD	<p><i>Spring and the Selfish Giant</i> was a simple but extremely effective production. Although I saw it in a primary school, the show would have worked equally as well in a professional venue.</p> <p>In my opinion, Andy Cannon is a natural storyteller. His strength is bringing stories to life.</p> <p>The piece was highly imaginative through use of simple props and most of all fun to watch.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation? If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme. 	VERY GOOD	<p>Wee Stories' website states that <i>it creates imaginative story telling theatre for all ages, touring into venues of all sizes from schools and village halls to large scale theatres. Its work is enjoyed by children and adults alike, spanning across generations.</i></p> <p><i>Spring and the Selfish Giant</i> fulfilled this aim very well. As mentioned, although I saw it in a school, it is also my view that it would have worked just as well in a professional venue too.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material? How well did it communicate the artistic themes? How did the event originate e.g. from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? <p>Education events – see ¹below for definition</p>	VERY GOOD	<p>The programme handout stated that it was a Scottish re-telling of Oscar Wilde's <i>The Selfish Giant</i>. Co-adapted by Andy Cannon and Iain Johnstone, the piece was a clever adaptation of the original story. In the true, inimitable way of Wee Stories, the adaptation integrated Scottish words within the general fabric of the story.</p> <p>The performance also linked with the Curriculum for Excellence.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments. How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience? In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop? 	VERY GOOD	<p>The performance was well performed by Andy Cannon and dancer/actor, Emma Snellgrove. Both played multiple characters in the story.</p> <p>In particular, Andy Cannon shone in his role of narrator and performer. He is an engaging performer and kept his young audience entranced throughout.</p>

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
Dance, Theatre	Choreography/Use of choreography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work original? • How was the space used? • How many dancers were there and how were they used? • How long was the piece? 	N/A	Although choreography is not credited, I thought the actor, Emma Snellgrove, could have had a background in dance. Her movement was, at times, beautiful to watch. However, as there was no programme as such, I am not sure if this is actually the case.
Theatre	Script Please comment on this for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new work • second productions • classics where the original has been substantially changed 	VERY GOOD	The script was a co-adaptation by the two co-creative directors – Andy Cannon and Iain Johnstone. The story was coherent and was aimed at the entire primary age range. Andy Cannon introduced the children to some of the Scottish words. Given its intended age range, I thought the script worked well and kept the children engaged throughout. This included the P1s right up to the P7s.
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	GOOD	Although direction was not credited, it is my understanding that both co-creative directors were behind the direction of the piece. It was deftly handled to make the story easily understood to its intended age group. It is my view that it was presented well and executed to a high standard.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	GOOD	Recorded music by Iain Johnstone was used to complement the production.
Dance, Theatre	Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How were the costumes, set and lighting? • How did it work in the venue? • Was it technically proficient? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc). 	GOOD	Design was simple and effective. I thought it worked well within the school setting.
All	Quality of Public Engagement Performing Arts/Education - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the production/event targeted at a particular audience? • Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants? • Were you/ engaged/inspired? • Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired? • What was their response? • Approximately how many people were there? • Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled? • Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the 	VERY GOOD	Wee Stories did two performances on the day for the whole school. The company had advised the school to make up the audience with children ranging from P1 to P7. This worked really well. In my view, Andy Cannon is charming to watch as he integrated the children in with the performance. The children that I saw it with were completely captivated and engaged throughout, (as were the teachers). This applied to the whole age range in the audience. There were approximately two hundred in the audience, which included teachers. The company had a handout on the day, which suggested how the performance linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. It also gave a translation for some of the Scottish vocabulary.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>run/tour/? If so how many?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event eg workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info? • Were these targeted at specific age groups? <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was it taught/led eg one to one, group, child centred? • What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix? • Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning & Development • What learning/skills development took place? • What was the quality of the art produced by the participants? • Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project? • How were participants recruited? • Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project? <p>Crafts/Visual Arts Use of equipment, space and overall layout/hang?</p>		

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								
<p>Location and suitability of the venue for the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route? Are the spaces clean? What were the sight lines like? How big was it? 	<p>My understanding was that <i>Spring and the Selfish Giant</i> was specifically aimed at primary schools. I saw it at Queensferry Primary School, which was easy to find. I got directions when I called the school to book my place.</p> <p>It was highly appropriate for the performance to take place in a school hall.</p>								
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event? Is there information on the venue's website? 	<p>Information was included on Wee Stories' website. I did not see any posters on display at the school but as the tour was for schools only, perhaps the company did not produce print.</p>								
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in? What publicity materials are produced? Is it easy to understand? Where can you get the information? Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²? <p>Please be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event and comment on the company/organisation's website.</p>	<p>SAC accreditation was on information hand out and is prominent on the home page of the company's website.</p>								
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>N/A</p>								
<p>Timing of the event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience? Was the length appropriate? 	<p>The length was appropriate (approximately one hour).</p>								
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the entrance clearly marked? Is there clear internal directional signage? Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops? 	<p>N/A</p>								
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event 	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/ No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/ No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>Audio description of</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/ No		Yes/ No	BSL interpretation	N/A	Audio description of	N/A
	Yes/ No		Yes/ No						
BSL interpretation	N/A	Audio description of	N/A						

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.

Criteria	Comment			
Please add in any additional comments below the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 			performances	
	Captioning	N/A	Lift/ramp	N/A
	Accessible toilets	N/A	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	N/A
Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering) If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers? 	The Head Teacher was very helpful and friendly in advance of my visit. She gave me directions to the school. On the day, she was very hospitable.			

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.

A programme for the production was not deemed to be appropriate as this tour was specifically for schools. An information sheet about the production and the Curriculum for Excellence links was produced for teachers.

This information sheet did not feature full credits for the production. The production was directed by Iain Johnstone and was choreographed by Emma Snellgrove.