



### 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:** Macrobert Stirling

**Title of Event:** The Sun, the Moon and a boy called River

**Type of Event:** Performance

**Date of Visit:** 3 October 2009

**Overall Rating:** Very good

**This was a very good production and well suited to its target audience. I felt it was not well served by the venue it was presented in, however this did not detract from the enjoyment of the piece.**

**It showed imagination and flair in its story telling.**

**Name:** Lorna Duguid  
*Specialist Advisor*

**Date:** 14 October 2009

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"> <li>Quality of ideas</li> <li>if you have seen other work of this artist(s)/ company before, please comment on any relevant comparisons</li> </ul>	Very Good	<p>This was a simple story told in Wee Stories trademark style, and showed real imagination in the simple and direct way it drew its audience into a make believe world of fairy tale kings and woodcutters, without patronising them. It also played with the form of theatre as sometimes the characters addressed the audience directly, sometimes they were in their own world and sometimes ( to get around awkward mistakes!) they spoke to the audience as Actors playing characters. This was never confusing, and added considerably to the feeling of total involvement between actors and audience. There were some truly lovely theatrical moments such as the suggestion of the passing of seasons by pouring first white confetti over a tree stump, then flower petals, then leaves.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it fit within the artistic vision of the organisation?</li> <li>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</li> </ul>	good	<p>The Macrobert has carved a niche for itself in programming children's work and this fit well into a range of activities for young people and children.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does it relate to information contained in the programme, the website or other printed material?</li> <li>How well did it communicate the artistic themes?</li> <li>How did the event originate e.g. from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission?</li> </ul> <p>Education events – see <sup>1</sup>below for definition</p>	good	<p>This was a good example of theatrical story telling, aimed directly at a young audience, who participated and engaged with the show very well. This is wee stories aim and I think this show achieved it well. The artistic themes of the story were clearly communicated, using simple props and archetypal characters.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the expertise of the performers? Where performers are amateur, please reflect this in your comments.</li> <li>How successfully did the performer(s) communicate with and engage the audience?</li> </ul>	Very good	<p>The two performers Andy Cannon and Iain Johnstone are both very experienced in this form of theatre and this came across in their easy manner with the audience and in their ability to make light of the occasional technical mistake and keep the audience focused. The Musician Jennifer Port provided excellent accompaniment and atmosphere in the songs and incidental harp music.</p>

<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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>		
Dance, Theatre	<p>Choreography/Use of choreography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the work original?</li> <li>How was the space used?</li> <li>How many dancers were there and how were they used?</li> <li>How long was the piece?</li> </ul>	n/a	
Theatre	<p>Script</p> <p>Please comment on this for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new work</li> <li>second productions</li> <li>classics where the original has been substantially changed</li> </ul>	good	This was a good script telling a traditional story, with a fair bit of humour. However I felt the script was not as important to the piece as the characters and their interactions as it was this that brought the piece alive.
Theatre, Dance	<p>Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the work well interpreted?</li> <li>Was it well cast?</li> <li>Was it well presented?</li> </ul>	good	All round this was typical of the wee stories style and worked well.
Dance, Theatre	<p>Use of music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the music/ sound used enhance the production?</li> <li>Is it live or recorded?</li> </ul>	Very good	Live music provided by Iain Johnstone and Jennifer Port was very good and atmospheric.
Dance, Theatre	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How were the costumes, set and lighting?</li> <li>How did it work in the venue?</li> <li>Was it technically proficient? (E.g. lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>	satisfactory	The costumes and set were functional in telling the story but there seemed to be a big problem with fitting the set into this venue. I am not sure if the space the show was in was the one originally planned for (see venue comments), but it seemed to me that the actors felt cramped by the set and there was very little room for them to move around. This adversely affected the performance. However the lighting effects were simple and effective and the show was strong enough to overcome this.
All	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the production targeted at a particular audience?</li> <li>Was the production /event appropriate for the audience/participants?</li> <li>Were you/ engaged/inspired?</li> <li>Did the audience/ participants appear to be engaged/inspired?</li> <li>What was their response?</li> <li>Approximately how many people were there?</li> <li>Did there appear to be a broad mix of people – age, cultural diversity or disabled?</li> <li>Are BSL/captioned/audio described performances offered as part of the</li> </ul>	Very good	<p>A packed audience of children and parents who were all completely engaged with the performance. I would have estimated around 60 people at 11am on a Saturday morning.</p> <p>The children's ages ranged from around 4 to 10. I was unaware of any other activity supporting the performance.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>run/tour/? If so how many?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities or supporting materials were available to enhance the experience of the event e.g. workshops, artist's talks, discussion groups programmes, on line info?</li> <li>• Were these targeted at specific age groups?</li> </ul> <p>Education/learning events: In addition, please provide comments on the following (if appropriate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How was it taught/led e.g. one to one, group, child centred?</li> <li>• What was the composition of the participant group – age range, gender mix?</li> <li>• Is it strategically linked to the curriculum or national policy areas e.g. Early Years, Community Learning &amp; Development</li> <li>• What learning/skills development took place?</li> <li>• What was the quality of the art produced by the participants?</li> <li>• Did the workshop tutor have a teaching plan for the session and/or project?</li> <li>• How were participants recruited?</li>   <li>• Did participants' views and choices help inform the structure and content of the project?</li> </ul> <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 e.g. 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"> <li>• Is it easy to find?</li> <li>• Is it on a main transport route?</li> <li>• Are the spaces clean?</li> <li>• What were the sight lines like?</li> <li>• How big was it?</li> </ul>	<p>The Macrobert suffers a little from being out of town on the University campus but transport is easy. However there seemed to be a big problem with the management of this event on the day. Tickets were printed for The Playhouse which is an excellent space for this type of show being designed to cater for young audiences. As a result I and several other people made our way (after being in the foyer for at least 30 minutes) to the doors of this studio about 15 minutes before the show time. There was no staff member at this door and the doors were closed. At 1 minute to 11 an usher appeared and announced that the show had been moved to the workshop space and to follow her. On arriving at the workshops space the seating was chaotic (Andy Cannon the actor was actually seating the audience) despite there appearing to be 4 members of staff around. As a result the show went up late. It would have seemed a simple solution to post one of the 4 staff outside the original venue to direct people? As mentioned before the space seemed far too small for the show and demand would suggest that they could have sold more tickets in a bigger space.</p>
<p>Information/ interpretive material at venue—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there programmes, posters and displays about the event?</li> <li>• Is there information on the venue's website?</li> </ul>	<p>Good free programme and leaflets available</p>
<p>Publicity/ pre-publicity –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What leaflets, posters, websites, did you see the event listed in?</li> <li>• What publicity materials are produced?</li> <li>• Is it easy to understand?</li> <li>• Where can you get the information?</li> <li>• Is there Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding<sup>2</sup>?</li> </ul> <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>Wee stories website is clear with show information and tour dates. Macrobert brochure had good information. SAC funding acknowledged on print and programme</p>

<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 (e.g. venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

Criteria	Comment																
Ease of booking and payment	Booked online – very easy																
Timing of the event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?</li> <li>Was the length appropriate?</li> </ul>	Yes appropriate for this age range																
Signage and signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the entrance clearly marked?</li> <li>Is there clear internal directional signage?</li> <li>Is there Braille signage or signage for audio loops?</li> </ul>	good																
Access and provision for disabled people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please insert yes/no in the boxes to reflect what you notice about the venue/event</li> </ul> Please add in any additional comments below the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue?</li> </ul>	<table border="1" data-bbox="571 622 1251 1144"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 622 823 689"></th> <th data-bbox="828 622 916 689">Yes/No</th> <th data-bbox="920 622 1163 689"></th> <th data-bbox="1168 622 1251 689">Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 696 823 792">BSL interpretation</td> <td data-bbox="828 696 916 792">no</td> <td data-bbox="920 696 1163 792">Audio description of performances</td> <td data-bbox="1168 696 1251 792">no</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 799 823 873">Captioning</td> <td data-bbox="828 799 916 873">no</td> <td data-bbox="920 799 1163 873">Lift/ramp</td> <td data-bbox="1168 799 1251 873">yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 880 823 1144">Accessible toilets</td> <td data-bbox="828 880 916 1144">yes</td> <td data-bbox="920 880 1163 1144">Accessible marketing materials e.g. website or alternative formats e.g. large print, Plain English</td> <td data-bbox="1168 880 1251 1144">yes</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	no	Audio description of performances	no	Captioning	no	Lift/ramp	yes	Accessible toilets	yes	Accessible marketing materials e.g. website or alternative formats e.g. large print, Plain English	yes
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Customer service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)</li> <li>If possible, comment on how responsive they were to the needs of disabled customers?</li> </ul>	As described above a little chaotic but friendly enough.																

**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.