



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:	Lickety Spit
Venue:	macrobert
Title of Event:	Heelie- go- Leerie
Type of Event:	Performance
Date of Visit:	26 April 2008
Overall Rating:	Good
<p>A well directed, designed and performed piece which has educational value. The show received a positive response from the audience. While this is the case, I wondered to what degree the focus on traditional child's play throughout provided the older end of the wide 3-12years target audience with new and challenging ideas and perceptions.</p>	
Name: Angela Hogg	Date: 12 June 2008
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.	Good	<p>Director and writer Virginia Radcliffe has demonstrated a strong commitment to her young audiences over the years through her child centred approach to theatre making.</p> <p>This is particularly evident in Heelie-go-Leerie's theme which presents the world of child's play (minus computer games) to its young target audience of 3-12years.</p> <p>However, while Heelie-go-Leerie offered positive affirmation for children (as well as educational value in relation to the environment and cultural identity) I wondered how much it provided the older end of the target audience with an exploration of concepts and ideas beyond their experience and comfort zone.</p>
All (if relevant)	<p>Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection Please indicate how the event originated eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, artist-led or commissioned.</p> <p>If the event is part of a Festival, please say how it contributes to the overall programme.</p>	Good	<p>Heelie-go-Leerie came together following a developmental project which involved artists working with children through play and storytelling. Children provided some material for the show.</p>
All	<p>Success of event against stated aims - in the programme or other printed material, including how well it communicated the artistic themes.</p> <p>Education events – see ¹below for guidance</p>	Good	<p>Company quotes include:</p> <p><i>Heeliewill celebrate the riches of childhood and the energy, wit and tenacity of children.</i></p> <p>The production's theme about child's play came across very clearly during the performance.</p>
All	<p>Performers/tutors - technical standard, performance skills and ability to communicate and engage.</p> <p>Where performers are not trained, please reflect this in your comments.</p>	Good	<p>Good overall. John MacAuley, Paul Chaal and Christine Devaney delivered bold, energetic, physical performances and skilfully interacted with the set and props.</p> <p>I am aware that it can be very challenging for adult performers to play children without resorting to the use of exaggerated expression (which can come across as patronising).</p> <p>The performers in Heelie-go-Leerie were not patronising in their approach however I did feel they lacked sufficient subtlety at times to fully convince me of their youthful characterisations.</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 - 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.	Competent	<p>Heelie-go –Leerie had educational value in that it reflected issues of the environment, cultural diversity and how play can support children going through difficult experiences in life.</p> <p>The show's reflection of child's play from a range of cultural backgrounds was positive especially as it included basic group based storytelling/rhyme/song which is at odds with the reality for many children in this country given the modern day pre-occupation with solitary, internet based pursuits.</p> <p>However, I also felt that focussing entirely on traditional play based scenarios in delivering the storyline may have provided limited opportunity for the older (10-12 years) target audiences to be challenged. I felt that the material was sometimes quite predictable (eg stories of witches and dragons) and provided much of what they already know rather than offering up new ideas and insights.</p>
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Good	<p>Well conceived stage direction. Good use of imaginative set provided various layers and levels for the performances (in keeping with the theme of child's play). The cast comfortably manoeuvred themselves around and through the set.</p> <p>Good use of repetition to establish context. Effective physical theatre elements and some nice symbolism used. Good use of eastern music and language. Beautiful dragon scene.</p> <p>I really liked the final scene of the children playing. It successfully created a meaningful scenario without having to use words.</p>
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/recorded) to the production.	Good	A variety of styles of music and singing used to appropriately reflect the different cultures depicted. Good sound effects.
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.	Good	Well designed set effectively represented a makeshift play area using an abandoned washing machine etc. Lighting effective but not a particularly strong element.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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>	Competent	Supported the action appropriately.
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>		<p>A good house which responded enthusiastically.</p> <p>However, as outlined above, I question the degree to which the older end of the target audience were provided with ideas and perceptions beyond their current experience.</p>
All	<p>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.</p>	N/A	This was not assessed but I am aware from website information that there is an accompanying teacher's pack.
All	<p>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)?</p>	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	Worked well in the macrobert theatre space.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Information in macrobert programme. Large programmes given out at the end with activities related to the show. The programme also encouraged children to write poems and rhymes.
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.	Lots of website information, macrobert brochure.
Ease of booking and payment	Guest ticket arranged.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Fine.
External signage and signposting	Fine.
Internal directional signage	Fine.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Accessible.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good.
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Acknowledged on website and after show programme.

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.