



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: Macrobert Arts Centre

Venue: Macrobert Arts Centre, playhouse

Title of Event: Rudolf

Type of Event: performance

Date of Visit: 03.12.2008

Overall Rating: Excellent

(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.)

Rudolf is a lovely, quirky, engaging contemporary re-telling of the story for children (3-5yrs.) and families or carers. A nicely imaginative alternative to traditional pantomime for younger children. A very successful event.

Name: Tim Licata

Date: 07 / 12 / 2008

Specialist Advisor

Please circle the relevant title

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	Rudolf is a lovely, quirky, imaginative re-telling of the story of Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer through the play of two silly, slightly inept, very child-friendly characters (expertly performed by Any Manley and Ross Allan). The story is nicely modernised, with humour, for contemporary 3 –5 year olds. Rudolf offers an alternative, very engaging, fun Christmas fare for children and adults, carers. Very well conceived and executed.
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.	Excellent	Rudolf was commissioned as one of the Macrobert Arts Centre's Christmas performances in 2008. MAC has previously worked with Andrew Manley on a past Christmas production. Very appropriate for this age group and holiday programming.
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	“A seasonal tale from the creators of last year's sell-out success The Littlest Christmas Tree. Recommended age 3 – 5” – Macrobert website. There are no stated aims listed in particular for this production, but it was created to be an imaginative, engaging re-telling of this traditional story for contemporary children and their carers. The style of the show also offers a nice alternative to traditional pantomime. Aimed at 3 to 5 year olds, Rudolf succeeds in these aims and is a very successful creation.
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	Andrew Manley and Ross Allan are excellent performers in all areas: technical standard, performance skills and ability to engage and communicate. The show is nicely interactive with performers directly engaging children with the storytelling, but always keeping the story moving. The role played by Andrew Manley in the performance I saw, was supposed to be played by Robert Evans. Due to an accident in the dress rehearsal, Robert Evans was not able to perform and Andy Manley, who directed the show, had to step in. I did not know about the accident before the performance and, had I not been told afterwards, I would never have realised the substitution. The performance was realised to a very high standard.

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	Good	No choreography in the traditional sense, but good and imaginative use of space and movement in the production.
Theatre	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions. Relevant to classics where the original has been substantially changed.	Good	Rudolf is a new script by Andy Manley, commissioned by the Macrobert Arts Centre for this production. The script is good, fun, conversational, spiced with fun contemporary references keeping both children and adults engaged. The framework created to tell the story is fun and social messages of accepting differences are skilfully woven into the script and action. I remember being confused at some moments in the story, very briefly (can't remember which, so they cleared up pretty quickly...) and also remember wanting more in the climax of Rudolf being asked to pull Santa's sleigh. A bigger pay-off seemed necessary in this action...
Theatre, Dance	Direction - Concerns issues of interpretation, casting and presentation.	Excellent	Good, clear, imaginative, strong direction. I particularly enjoyed the use of space on the stage, the 'birth' of Rudolf (great lighting effect of Rudolf in utero...!) Good, fun direction of character relationships and clear creation and definition of multiple characters by the actors.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music – appropriateness and effect of sound or music (whole/part, live/ recorded) to the production.	Good	Original music by Daniel Krass (recorded) was good. Appropriate, fun and supported the action and atmospheres on stage.
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	Set, costumes and lighting were all excellent, of very high quality. The set and costumes by Claire Halleran were excellent. Set was beautiful. Beautifully designed and beautifully built. A lovely environment was created with very good use of height (telephone pole) and stage spaces. Lighting by Sergeiy Jakovsky also excellent – well complimenting the set. Great colours, use of Christmas lights into the audience. Also the set up and design of the entryway to the theatre, which created a lovely magical atmosphere for the show, both set and lights, was great.
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	Excellent, professional technical presentation.

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
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>Sold out performance, capacity of 100, with children and family/carers. Audience was made up mostly of children 3-5 yrs with a parent or carer, exactly as intended. Children and adults were engaged throughout. Lots of laughter and response from the audience. Strong applause at the end. Audience very much enjoyed the event.</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>	NA	Performance evaluation
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>	NA	Performance evaluation

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	The Studio theatre at the Macrobert Arts Centre was a fine venue for this event.
Information/ interpretive material at venue - programmes, displays etc.	Very nice, simple programme of good quality with usual production information, also a page for children to cut out and colour, with address to send artwork to the Macrobert reindeer parade – nice. Good simple graphics. A very good display, which was almost part of the set, created in the hallway leading to the theatre, darkened snowy fairy lit environment, establishing a lovely, magical, winter atmosphere for the show, also children's artwork specific to the show, hung on the walls. Very inviting atmosphere created for all, esp. children.
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 graphics for programme and poster / flyers. Simple, direct, eye catching, well laid out information. Listings in all usual and appropriate media. Flyers at the Macrobert.
Ease of booking and payment	Fine. Professional. Online booking, telephone and box office.
Location of venue – eg is it easy to find? Is it on a main transport route?	Easiest to get to the Macrobert by car. But possible by train and public transport. Good directions available for all modes of transport on Macrobert's website.
External signage and signposting	Good.
Internal directional signage	This could be better, esp. for studio theatre. When I attended, it was a, very busy atmosphere; I waited in wrong place and almost missed the start of show. For someone who knows the venue, no problem, but for a person coming for first time it can be difficult. Staff or better signs would be helpful to make sure of internal directions.
Access and provision for disabled people – what can you see?	Appeared fine. Ramps for wheel chair access, toilets for disabled people available.
Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good. All appropriate.
Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g. box office, front of house, bar and/or catering)	Good. Box office staff and front of house staff friendly and efficient. Would be good if box office staff had driving directions available for phone enquiries. Bar staff in foyer, friendly but slow.

Criteria	Comment
Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding ²	Scottish Arts Council prominently acknowledged on all promotional material and organisation's website.

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.