



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:	MacRobert Youth Theatre 5
Venue:	Macrobert Studio
Title of Event:	Star Crossed
Type of Event:	Youth Theatre Performance part of FebFest (youth theatre Shakespeare Season)
Date of Visit:	19th February 2010

(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.)

Good

The idea of using Shakespeare plays and creating new short plays inspired by them worked well for FebFest. There was an energy and real commitment to the piece that had very obviously been developed with a great deal of input from the group. It was a shame that there was not more ambition and imagination in the actual performing and presentation of the piece.

Name: Stephen Stenning Date: 12th March 2010
Specialist Advisor

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	Vision and imagination of work <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 	Satisfactory	The piece took its inspiration from Romeo and Juliet with a modern setting and accordingly new characters. The ideas behind the adaptation were well developed and followed through without being hugely imaginative. In this version two youth groups come together to perform Romeo and Juliet. A good deal of work had gone into ensuring that it did 'work' as a plot in its own right. However the idea of a youth theatre performing a version of a Romeo and Juliet by taking on the role of a youth theatre performing the actual play made the job of communicating the plot fairly complicated. There was not really anything surprising or imaginative beyond the clever and thorough work on developing the script.
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <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	The notion of FebFest 2010 is a very good one which fits well with macrobert's artistic vision. It is supported by MPower and part of the project to create platforms for work planned and delivered by young people. Within the festival there were four "playhouse performances and then a main house production of "Ilyria" by the macrobert's Young Company. For each of the playhouse productions one of macrobert's youth theatres took a different text (The Tempest, Titus Andronicus and Macbeth as well as Romeo and Juliet) and used it as the inspiration for a new piece. The resultant performances were scheduled from Thursday to Saturday of one week with the performance of "Ilyria" being performed on the Friday and Saturday of the following week.
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <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 eg from the exhibiting/ producing organisation, from the artist or from commission? Education events – see ¹ below for definition	Satisfactory	The process was looking to create innovative new productions inspired by Shakespeare's plays; to offer young people the opportunity to challenge themselves as performers and a chance for the youth theatres to engage in the theatre production process. The piece was recognisable as a piece inspired by Romeo and Juliet; it held together and in some sense introduced the main themes of Romeo and Juliet. It felt like a new approach to the play that had obviously been worked up with the young performers but it could not readily be described as innovative. There was a very impressive sense of ownership of the work and no little commitment to it. That said, for the most part, it was not particularly stretching for the cast and at points elements of the performance was a little half-hearted (e.g. an improvised section which was accompanied by a fit of giggles).

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

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
All	Performers/tutors <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? 	Good	The young cast performed well as an ensemble and managed to communicate a fairly involved adaptation. I think that more attention in rehearsals had gone into creating the scenarios for the script than on working on performance skills. For example, not much work had gone into trying to distinguish the one or two characters that were playing adult or older characters for all that performers delivered the roles confidently. There were some moments of real pathos and drama and they were performed extremely well which suggested that the cast could have risen to an approach that challenged their performance skills more.
	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	Not applicable
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	Gordon Barr the drama artist is credited with having put the script together I assume from improvisations and ideas worked up with the group. The idea of gangs of youths whose feud could be chased back to a road accident was an idea I suspect that had come from the group. The task of pulling together a script that is true to the devising process and works in its own right is a difficult one, but "Star-Crossed" appeared to strike that balance well. The inclusion of the bits of the original text was skilfully handled to ensure that it did not appear too contrived.
Theatre, Dance	Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the work well interpreted? • Was it well cast? • Was it well presented? 	Satisfactory	It is difficult to know how much time there was in the production process to introduce much in the way of interesting direction. The new piece was well communicated and the story-telling was reasonably clear but there was little imagination or finesse to the direction.
Dance, Theatre	Use of music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the music/ sound used enhance the production? • Is it live or recorded? 	N/A	Not applicable
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). 	Poor	There was not really any costume or set design. It was appropriate that the cast wore their own cloths and there was a sense of there being a distinction between the styles worn by the two groups but it was not clearly or imaginatively followed through. Again for a studio production you do not expect a full set but the odd well-placed item of furniture or prop can add interest. The lighting sensitively designed and efficiently operated.

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
All	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <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 run/tour/? If so how many? • 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>	Good	<p>There was a mixture of people in the audience. As you would expect there were quite a number of teenagers (possibly participants of other groups) but there were also a number of families and older people. The auditorium in the studio theatre was probably a bit over half full with an audience of around 60. The audience was definitely engaged and they were responsive and attentive.</p> <p>The programme that was handed out gives good information about FebFest and enough information about each production. The production was very well targeted by the teenage group for their peers but it was also accessible and enjoyable for the whole audience.</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>The macrobert is not far off a main route and easy to find. I believe it is also on a bus route. The studio theatre was ideal size for the piece and the sight lines are excellent.</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>There were photocopied programmes that were handed out which gave information about Febfest and each production. There was also some information on macrobert's website.</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>The only information that I was aware of was on the macrobert's website. The Scottish Arts Council logo appears on the programme and on the website.</p>								
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>Very easy – I booked on the phone</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 piece was just under an hour long and that felt about right. The start time was appropriate.</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>The signage both external and internal is very good and clear.</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 <p>Please add in any additional</p>	<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>No</td> <td>Audio description of</td> <td>No</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of	No
	Yes/No		Yes/No						
BSL interpretation	No	Audio description of	No						

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			
comments below the table <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many BSL/captioned/audio described performances are there at the venue? 			performances	
	Captioning	No	Lift/ramp	Yes
	Accessible toilets	Yes	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	No
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? 	Very good everyone was very helpful.			

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.