



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.**

<b>Artist/Company:</b>	<b>Macrobert</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Macrobert Arts Centre</b>
<b>Title of Event:</b>	<b>Complete Productions – <i>Peep, The Night Before Christmas and Sleeping Beauty.</i></b>
<b>Type of Event:</b>	<b>Performance</b>
<b>Date of Visit:</b>	<b>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 - <i>Peep</i> Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – <i>The Night Before Christmas</i> Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2009 – <i>Sleeping Beauty</i></b>
<b>Overall Rating: VERY GOOD</b> <i>(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.)</i>	
Macrobert must be applauded for producing and staging three Christmas shows aimed at the whole gamut of ages. The shows for the younger children had a linked theme about loneliness and the importance of friendship. Complete Productions' <i>Peep</i> , aimed at 0-3 years, was an interactive and playful piece, which had early years children engaged throughout. <i>The Night Before Christmas</i> aimed at 3 – 5 year olds was a magical experience and journey for early years that had them completely captivated. <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> was a hilarious (and at times risqué) take on one of our much loved stories. With Johnny McKnight in the lead role as panto dame, the ingredients were all there for a fun couple of hours. Full marks to the young cast in <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> who must have had a lot of fun and a great learning experience in what it takes to stage a professional production.	
<b>Name: WENDY NIBLOCK</b> Scottish Arts Council Officer	<b>Date: 30/01/10</b>

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"> <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>Macrobert produced two of its Christmas productions and staged one in association with Complete Productions/Starcatchers. The three productions catered for a wide range of ages that included early years up to older people.</p> <p>All three productions were well staged. In a gentle way, the two performances aimed at early years – <i>Peep</i> and <i>The Night before Christmas</i> looked at issues surrounding loneliness and friendship. The two pieces were, in my view, beautifully presented and were pitched at the right level for their intended audience.</p> <p>In the main auditorium, macrobert continued its relationship with acclaimed actor and director, Johnny McKnight. Under the skilful direction of Andy Manley, McKnight and the other talented cast members gave its audience a fun and jaw dropping few hours at some of their well crafted antics.</p>
All (if relevant)	Curatorial/ programming vision/ selection <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>	VERY GOOD	<p>On the homepage of its website, macrobert states <i>that it offers an exciting programme of events that welcomes everyone.</i></p> <p>All three productions were testament to a strong programme of work that catered for a wide range of ages.</p>
All	Success of event against stated aims of project and/or performance <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 eg 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>In her foreword, the outgoing Director, Liz Moran, mentions that macrobert had brought together some of the most talented artists in Scotland.</p> <p>In my opinion, she was quite correct as all three productions had strong casts, in particular <i>The Night Before Christmas</i> and <i>Sleeping Beauty</i>. The cast in <i>Peep</i> were perfect for 0-3 year olds and handled their young audience with sensitivity and care.</p> <p>The publicity material sold each of the shows well although the image used for <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> was misleading. A beautiful illustration for a more traditional version of the story whereas this show was more 'disco-tastic'.</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
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> <li>• In your view, was an artist as a tutor key to the success of the workshop?</li> </ul>	VERY GOOD	<p><i>Peep</i> This was beautifully performed by Charlotte Maslin-Prothero and complemented by musician, Greg Sinclair. I thought that both performers sensitively handled their very young audience and encouraged them to interact through the simple use of props e.g. feathers.</p> <p><i>The Night Before Christmas</i> Performed by Veronica Leer and Ben Lewis, this was a joy to watch. Veronica Leer, in particular, who played lonely and grumpy Carol until she was transformed when she met a lost elf was excellent. Both communicated the story well to their young audience. The children that I was with were captivated throughout the performance and even now (a month after seeing the show) can remember lines from the performance.</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Once again, macrobert stalwart, Johnny McKnight stole the show as the 'panto dame'. It is my view that he is the new Stanley Baxter. At times, he was very risqué but he delivered it in such a way that it was hilarious. He was well supported by Michele Gallagher, Ross Allan, Gavin Wright, Anita Vitesse and newcomer Charlene Boyd.</p> <p>Casts of young people from the local area were integrated into the performance. All provided strong performances.</p> <p>All the audience (young and old) laughed their way through two hours of sheer entertainment.</p>
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>	GOOD	<p><i>Peep</i> Christine Devany is credited as movement consultant. I thought her work with the performer was appropriate for this role.</p> <p><i>The Night before Christmas</i> N/A</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Choreographer, Karen Martin, must have had a ball choreographing this cast. Big and bold movement, which again, was highly appropriate for the piece.</p>
Theatre	<p>Script 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	<p><i>Peep</i> Dramaturgy was credited to Brenda Murphy. Text was limited to cater for early years. I thought the piece was coherent for early years.</p> <p><i>The Night before Christmas</i> Written (and directed) by Rob Evans. The story was easy for the children to follow. One of the children that I took still recites some of Elf's lines and he has just turned three. The script was coherent and engaging for 3-5 year olds.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			<p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Written by Johnny McKnight, his script was bold and brash and extremely funny, if a bit risqué at times. I thought there was something in the show to accommodate all ages.</p>
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>	VERY GOOD	<p><i>Peep</i> Direction by Heather Fulton was gentle and sensitive and worked beautifully. The performers worked well with each other and interacted wonderfully with the children. I know that Heather has gained much experience working with that age group over the last couple of years which is evident in her overall direction of the piece.</p> <p><i>The Night Before Christmas</i> Direction by Rob Evans. He has extensive writing experience for 3-5 year olds but I am not aware of his directing experience. His direction of <i>The Night Before Christmas</i> was assured and clear and he got great performances from his two cast members.</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Direction by Andy Manley. His direction was well paced and confident. He got strong performances from all his cast, including the young people who must have learned a lot about what it takes to stage a professional production. The integration of the young people into the show was, in my view, seamless.</p>
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>	GOOD	<p><i>Peep</i> Greg Sinclair created and performed in the piece. As he is one of Imagineate's Artists-in-Residence, his commitment to working with early years was, in my opinion, evident in both his performance and his music.</p> <p><i>The Night Before Christmas</i> Recorded music composed by Michael John McCarthy was light and appropriate for the intended age group. In my view, it was very atmospheric and highly complemented the production.</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> Recorded music composed and arranged by Alan Penman. Bold, fun and highly appropriate for this colourful show. The music greatly complemented the piece.</p>
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? (eg lighting and sound cues, etc).</li> </ul>	VERY GOOD	<p><i>Peep</i> Katy Wilson's set design was bright and cheerful and attracted and engaged her young audience. It was presented in the Tree House, which was a great choice of venue as the space is full of light. Everyone had to take off their shoes at the start, which I thought added to the whole experience.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
			<p><i>The Night Before Christmas</i>            Claire Halleran has built a strong relationship with Rob Evans and that is evident in her work. Her design was, in my opinion, beautiful, imaginative and inventive. It was highly complemented by visual effects from mPower and Jonathan Charles. Lighting by Lizzie Powell was highly effective and atmospheric.</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i>            Set Design by Kenny Miller was, in his usual style, wonderful with wild costume design by Alison Brown. Her 'Tosh and Pecs' and 'Fairy Kyle's' Christmas underwear costumes are an everlasting memory! Lighting by Dave Shea greatly complemented the show.</p>
All	<p>Quality of Public Engagement</p> <p>Performing Arts/Education -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the production/event 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 run/tour/? If so how many?</li> <li>• 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?</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 eg one to one, group,</li> </ul>	GOOD	<p>All three productions had their audiences entranced. With <i>Peep</i>, my view would be to make the parents aware earlier that it is an interactive piece and to encourage their children to explore. In the audience that I saw, there was one little boy who was desperate to explore but his grandfather kept holding him back. It was lovely to watch this sensory performance and to see the children playing with the props.</p> <p><i>The Night Before Christmas</i> was joyful to watch. For a young audience, they followed and understood the story throughout.</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> – what can I say? The audience were engaged on many levels (even if they did not want to be!). One poor man was identified and picked on by Fairy Kylie from the outset, which was extremely funny for the rest of the audience. Luckily, he took it in good spirit. Lots of laughter coming from the audience and for me, I was still laughing at some of the crazy antics the following day.</p> <p>Having seen the macrobert pantomime in the last two years, this is now a firm date on my cultural (and cheesy) calendar.</p>

Artform	Criteria	Rating	Comments and key reasons for rating
	<p>child centred?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 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"> <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>Macrobert is a bit off the beaten track and unless you drive, you have to get a train then either a bus or taxi to the venue. The venue is very child friendly, something it prides itself on.</p> <p>In terms of all the spaces that were used, sightlines were not a problem.</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>I was aware of publicity material at the venue including its season brochure and two banners advertising <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> and <i>The Night Before Christmas</i>.</p> <p>Programmes/handouts for <i>Peep</i> and <i>The Night Before Christmas</i> were free.</p> <p>A reasonably priced programme for <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> was sold by the ushers at the entrance to the auditorium. The programme contained a foreword by macrobert's Artistic Director, cast list, cast and young people's biographies, a published Scots version of the story by one of the local schools and information on How to Make a Christmas Tree. There was also a problem page with macrobert's very own Agony Aunt – yup you guessed it – Fairy Kylie!</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>Posters, fliers and macrobert's brochure were on display in the foyer. Two banners advertising the two macrobert produced shows – <i>The Night Before Christmas</i> and <i>Sleeping Beauty</i> were on prominent display as you entered the building. Both the banners and all print acknowledged SAC support. The website also gave information on all three shows.</p> <p>SAC logo is on the homepage of its website.</p>
<p>Ease of booking and payment</p>	<p>Booking for all three performances was done over the phone. All the tickets were at the box office for collection on the day.</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 (eg venue, gallery, etc) then SAC acknowledgement should appear against the particular programme entry for this event.

Criteria	Comment																
<p>Timing of the event</p> <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>	<p>Timing for <i>Peep</i> changed on the day because of the adverse weather conditions. However, the box office staff called in plenty of time to let you know the new time. <i>Peep</i> lasted 25 minutes. The young audience were then invited to join <i>Peep</i> for some bread and jam in the foyer. Although 25 minutes was long enough for the performance, I thought the ticket price of £6.50 was a bit steep.</p> <p><i>The Night Before Christmas</i> was at 11.00am and lasted for approximately one hour. Again, I thought the length of the performance was just right for 3-5 year olds.</p> <p><i>Sleeping Beauty</i> was at 2.00pm and was approximately two hours, excluding the interval. Two hours was an appropriate length to suit the wide range of ages that were in the audience.</p>																
<p>Signage and signposting</p> <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>	<p>Signage is clear within the venue. I was not aware of Braille signage or an audio loop.</p>																
<p>Access and provision for disabled people</p> <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> <p>Please add in any additional comments below the table</p> <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 1111 1252 1637"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> <th></th> <th>Yes/No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>BSL interpretation</td> <td>YES</td> <td>Audio description of performances</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Captioning</td> <td>NO</td> <td>Lift/ramp</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accessible toilets</td> <td>YES</td> <td>Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes/No		Yes/No	BSL interpretation	YES	Audio description of performances	YES	Captioning	NO	Lift/ramp	YES	Accessible toilets	YES	Accessible marketing materials eg website or alternative formats eg large print, Plain English	
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<p>Customer service</p> <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>	<p>Both the Box Office and Front of House staff were friendly and efficient. The time of the performance of <i>Peep</i> was changed because the weather conditions prevented the cast from getting there on time for the morning performance.</p> <p>The Box Office staff telephoned and gave plenty of notice about the delay and to let you know the new time.</p> <p>The weather conditions might have prevented deliveries in terms of catering. When I attended the two performances after Christmas, there seemed to</p>																



<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comment</b>
	be a short supply of what was on offer on the menu. However, I am putting that down to the freak weather conditions that Scotland experienced over the festive period.

**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.