

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL

DRAMA EVALUATION

Scottish Youth Theatre Roadshow Achievement Bute , Rothsay Pavillion 10 October 2003

This Roadshow was promoting the 2004 Summer Festival, targeting the 2 week foundation course. The event was free and consisted of a 1 hour drama workshop and a half hour presentation on SYT and the Summer Festival. A workshop leader and workshop assistant ran the event. The age range was 12-15. 10 participants from Rothsay Academy took part. Participants were given information packs to take away. They were informed that the next stage involves auditions which take place in 12 regional centres. Overall this was a positive, successful event however I have raised some issues as outlined below.

Workshop

The workshop got off to a good start, partly because the leader already knew some participants, and partly because the participants were enthusiastic and did not need any encouragement.

There was a clear structure and direction to the workshop. Warm up games gradually built up into short performance pieces. There were plenty of opportunities for participants to experience the devising process and be challenged to use their imaginations.

The workshop leader gave very clear instructions which elicited good responses. Participants remembered instructions given which is vital in ensuring a productive experience. The leader constantly checked if the group understood what was required. On some occasions the leader may have been too directorial and could have left more room for responses from participants.

A lot was achieved in a short space of time. The workshop provided good teamwork experience and discipline as well as theatre skills development. Participants clearly enjoyed the event. Some had obviously participated in similar events previously.

I was not sure how engaged the workshop assistant was. He often appeared to be wandering aimlessly about chewing gum. I have seen him at other events where this negative impression is not given. I may have misunderstood his approach to this particular event but felt it was important to raise this as an issue for future reference.

Presentation

An SYT display was available for young people to look at while listening to the presentation. The leader gave very clear and detailed information on the courses available and the logistics involved in taking part eg long working hours, SYT staff available, location, fundraising required. It enabled the audience to have a realistic understanding of what to expect eg audition, interview, discipline required to work hard, costs etc. The application form provided to participants had clear instructions.

The leader's approach to explaining the process was very supportive. Young people were reassured not to worry about messing up the audition – saying a key criteria is to enjoy the foundation course as a learning experience. They were made to feel that it is OK to be nervous. Participants were warned in advance that, due to numbers, not everyone is successful. However they were encouraged to try again if unsuccessful.

The presentation focussed a lot on the fundraising. The fees are relatively substantial but include residential costs. The focus was on the young people's responsibility for fundraising. While it is good to encourage strong commitment and responsibility from young people (rather than handing them something on a plate) I felt slightly uncomfortable that financial issues seemed to take precedence at this early stage of access to an arts situation. I would have viewed this as particularly difficult if the Roadshow had been presented within an area of economic disadvantage.

My main concern is the potential for longer term exclusion if young people associate theatre with an expense beyond their capability. Having said that advice was offered on fundraising. Participants were informed that support can be offered to young people having difficulty paying eg weekly instalments or financial support via SYT where necessary.

Organisation of the event

There should have been 2 events that day but the second workshop was cancelled. There was not enough take up due to the timing of the event. Achievement Bute said they had originally asked for a different time slot to ensure maximum attendance but their request was not accommodated.

Information/Interpretive material

As mentioned the display and application forms gave clear information and instructions.

Publicity/Pre-Publicity for the Event (leaflets, posters, etc)

The Roadshow was advertised in the Sytizen. The advert clearly explained what was on offer and what was required re venue, numbers and content of visit. Local posters were on display. The local paper came to take a photograph.

Venue (suitability/access)

Fine

Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council Funding (if applicable)

The Display accredited SAC.

Name: Angela Hogg

Date: 3/5/04

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer

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