

THE SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL

EVALUATION - DRAMA

Organisation/Venue: Theatre Workshop .
Title of Event: Degenerate 3
Type of Event: Disability Arts Festival
Date of Visit: 13th, 15th & 18th August 2005
Overall Rating: Good

Shows presented:

Lung Ha's	Monster's Tears	Scotland
Freya Linklater	Open Window	Scotland
Nasty Girls	Time Troupers	England
Mind The Gap	On The Verge	England
Deborah A Williams	Good Little N***a	England
Steve Holland	The Voice Stealer	England
Julie McNamarra	Pig's Sister – Tales Of the Unexpected	England

Degenerate also included a cabaret evening, play readings, film events, a book event, promenade interventions and a visual arts exhibition. The Degenerate programme intertwined with Fringe shows and British Council showcase events.

Quality (Good overall)

Degenerate shows/events viewed

Lung Ha's *Monster's Tears* - see attached evaluation.

Nasty Girls *Time Troupers*

Comedy laced with political commentary on disability from 4 talented (*gutsy*) women. I felt that *Time Troupers* would have benefited from stronger direction. Consequently (in my view) the performers' overall delivery lacked impact and professional discipline (or *slickness*). The audience of approximately 20 people appeared to appreciate this show.

Mind The Gap *On The Verge*

A well staged, well performed, interesting storytelling/film/live music collaboration involving performer Jez Colborne who recounted his journey across America on a Harley Davidson. A witty *take* on American culture from a performer with great stage presence. Beautifully filmed and skilfully edited. An appreciative audience (approximately 20).

Steve Holland *The Voice Stealer (6-11 year olds)*

A non-patronising, educational piece of children's theatre performed by an extremely enthusiastic writer/actor (Steve Holland) who was clearly keen to impart knowledge and interest in words. The young audience responded well to his storytelling and the characters he created. Some interesting/imaginative devices/props were used. Having said that I did lose my concentration at times. In my view this was due to the fact that the

storyteller appeared to become a bit *caught up in his own world* at certain moments, minimising impact and interaction. An audience of approximately 20 adults/children.

Robyn Hunt *Look at Me, Look at You (Play Reading)*.

This play reading was extremely well presented/performed. In my view Robyn's piece had a *gem of a good idea* which would benefit from the support of appropriate mentoring (script/staging). I was unable to imagine *Look at Me, Look at You* being staged as I listened to the script. I felt that some of the dialogue was unnecessary (and lacked depth at times). Having said that the overall scenario provided an interesting and creative challenge to taboos surrounding disability and sex. A full (appreciative) (studio) house.

Mat Fraser and Friends *Late Night Risque Cabaret*

I viewed Mat Fraser performing the first 20 minutes. A confident, witty performance based around disability culture. Matt Fraser has great charisma which (in my view) makes him an excellent advocate for breaking down stereotypical barriers re disability. The busy bar was *buzzing* with an audience which included quite a few festival performers.

Birds Of Paradise/RSAMD *Micro – Shakespeare **

I viewed this at an earlier date at the Arches. A positive, inclusive opportunity for young people to engage with Shakespeare. The audience interaction elements would have likely worked well at Degenerate.

Shows/events outwith Degenerate

Rokpa Children's Home, Nepal *Himalayan Celebrations*

A beautifully presented live/film event. The young accomplished performers provided a moving and enjoyable journey based on their life experiences through modern/traditional singing, dancing and costumes. A very good response from a full house.

Wierszalin (Poland) *Saint Oedipus*

This show went up 15 minutes late which I believe was due to a technical hitch. Overall I viewed Saint Oedipus as an unusual interesting piece. In particular I thought that the mask/physical theatre elements were excellent. However, in my view, some aspects of the background music, delivery of text and physical movements were a bit overly dramatic. The staging of this show appeared very cramped given that the show was set right in front of the first row of audience seats. The audience was small (but appreciative).

Strategic contribution re Scottish Arts Council Aims

To increase participation in the arts

A key aim of Degenerate is to increase participation in the arts for disabled people (artists and audiences). The event was well publicised and I was aware of a relatively good number of disabled audiences (and artists). It was positive to see disabled people employed as front of house staff.

To support artists in Scotland to fulfil their creative and business potential

The festival provides showcasing opportunities for Scottish based disabled artists (as well as artists from further afield). There was a real sense of a sector coming together to support each other and have creative dialogue through this event. For example I was aware that Robyn Hunt attracted other performers to her play reading (some of whom

took part in the after show discussion). Robyn was given access to viewpoints (and potential collaborators) through the opportunity of presenting her first ever script.

To Place the arts, culture and creativity at the heart of learning

Degenerate provides an opportunity for artists (and the public) to view good models of practice in disability arts. The work being presented also had intrinsic educational value. The children’s piece by *Mind The Gap* also had an interactive workshop.

Management of Event

	Criteria	Comments
1	Suitability of the venue for the event	Suitable.
2	Information/ interpretive material at venue ¹	There was a great deal of material available on all of the shows/events being presented at the venue.
3	Publicity/ pre-publicity ²	I received a variety of information. The festival programme was very informative.
4	Ease of booking and payment	Very good. Theatre Workshop arranged a special package of tickets for all the shows I viewed there during the festival.
5	External signage and signposting	Fine.
6	Internal directional signage	Fine.
7	Access and provision for disabled people	Good. I was aware of signers at events..
8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be	Appropriate

¹ These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

² Publicity/pre-publicity (leaflets, posters, etc), including the range, content, and when and where available. Be alert to the publicity available prior to your visit to the event. Also view and comment on the company’s website where one is advertised, commenting on the ease of use, and quality of content and presentation, and currency of information

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	appropriate for the audience?	
9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Box office staff were very efficient, pleasant and helpful.
10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding ³	Suitably acknowledged.

Name: Angela Hogg

Date:

Advisor

Scottish Arts Council Officer.

(Please tick above as appropriate)
