



Scottish Arts Council

**ARTISTIC EVALUATION – DRAMA**

**Organisation/Venue: North Edinburgh Arts Centre – Wee Stories**

**Title of Event: Labyrinth**

**Type of Event: Theatre Performance**

**Date of Visit: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2005**

**Overall Rating** (Please rate the production 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.)

Excellent. This production by Wee Stories based on the Greek tragedy of The Minotaur and Theseus was performed at North Edinburgh Arts Centre to an almost full audience of families. The audience very much enjoyed the performance.

**Name: Sally Hobson**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2005**

**Advisor**

**Scottish Arts Council Officer**

*Please tick the relevant title*

This report has been commissioned by the Scottish Arts Council to evaluate the artistic quality of the production named below. 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 may be made available to Scottish Arts Council Officers, Council and Committee members, and specialist advisors as appropriate. It will 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 Council to report on the overall performance of its Core 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, taking account of the following:

1.	Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
1.1	Vision and imagination	Excellent	Labyrinth – mystery of the monster in the maze created and performed by Andy Cannon and David Troughton. This is the story of Theseus the son of King Aegeus who lifted the curse from Athens by killing the minotaur. The creators made the presentation very lively and kept to an accurate re-telling of the story, and also personalised it by explaining key elements as they went along the way, such as bits of Greek history, and about Greek theatre. The thread of a story was the theme that underlay the whole tale and this was reflected in the tale itself. The set which was built around a thread reinforced the convention set up by the creators to include the audience in the job of keeping the main storyteller – Andy Cannon on track. The audience was encouraged to tell the storyteller not to lose the thread. He would drop a phrase and this would cue the audience the Greek Chorus - into action. This dramatic irony was nicely set up by David Troughton and served to underscore nicely the idea of a thread saving Theseus in the labyrinth. A major Greek tragedy since he loses the thread and forgets to go back to save himself from the curse! The idea of a tragedy having a happy ending was brilliantly worked through by giving the audience voting rights on the outcome. Very funny way to end the play, and make a point about remaining true to the idea of tragedy.
1.2	Clarity of Communication	Excellent	Everything was very clearly set out through the telling of the story of the minotaur, and certain elements highlighted. The direct style makes working with the audience a defined experience – the audience become a major part of the telling of the story, not just through audience participation but also in the methods of storytelling.

## 2. Strengths and Weaknesses

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the event with reference to the following:

2.	Criteria	Rating	Comment and key reasons for rating
2.1	Script – particularly in relation to new work or second productions	Good	Coherent and structured but with enough freedom to allow for Wee Stories particular style to emerge throughout the plot. Clear and didactic with regards to the overall impact of the words and ideas on the minds of young people – so entertaining whilst also educational and informative.

2.2	Direction	<b>Excellent</b>	Clear and well put together.
2.3	Standard of Performers – where performers are not trained, please reflect this in you comments	<b>Excellent</b>	Both Performers made good contact with audience. Direct address style allows\for a more intimate and direct communication. The intervention of ad-libbing is always a joy to watch, and Andy Cannon is especially good at working with young people in this way. Strong dramatic skills and performance abilities also present and support the overall high standard of work.
2.4	Use of Music <sup>1</sup>	<b>Excellent</b>	David Trouton was the musical director and composer on the production. He worked very well with Andy Cannon and produced good musical support to the overall production.
2.5	Use of Movement/ Choreography	<b>Good</b>	The two performers used the stage as fully as possible. It was a fairly full stage and Andy Cannon had to negotiate carefully the space available to him. Very nimble.
2.6	Design <sup>2</sup> – including set, costume and lighting design	<b>Good</b>	A quite complex and busy set that was required to fulfil a number of story obligations. Set designed by Evelyn Barbour, Lighting designed by Tariq Hussain
2.7	Technical Standards – was the production professionally presented from a technical point of view	<b>Good</b>	A high and professional standard was maintained with some very creative use of space and lighting.
2.8	Audience Response – appropriateness of the production for the audience, estimate the size and reaction		This audience of young children and their parents really enjoyed the performance and appreciated the direct address style of the company. They were asked to engage in a great deal of audience participation as the Greek Chorus. They did with the good nature and willingness that parents with young children seem to do when asked to do things they would normally not consider doing! Wee Stories make a virtue out of family willingness to be involved.

<sup>1</sup> In particular, please comment on the quality and appropriateness of any original music composed for the production. Please indicate whether the music was performed live or recorded, in whole or in parts, and what effect this has on the quality of the production.

<sup>2</sup> Take into account how appropriate the design is in relation to the venue and, where appropriate, the touring schedule

### 3. 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.*

3.	Criteria	Comments
3.1	Suitability of the venue for the event	Suitable venue. Has strong family programme which allows for companies like Wee Stories to be well supported.
3.2	Information/ interpretive material at venue <sup>3</sup>	Good
3.3	Publicity/ pre-publicity <sup>4</sup>	Good information in foyer. End of current tour so lots of information had been available for some time.
3.4	Ease of booking and payment	Good
3.5	External signage and signposting	Good
3.6	Internal directional signage	Good
3.7	Access and provision for disabled people	Good
3.8	Timing of the event – was the length appropriate? Did the start and finish time seem to be appropriate for the audience?	Good
3.9	Customer service - quality and efficiency of staff (e.g., box office, front of house and bar/catering)	Good

<sup>3</sup> These include programmes, displays etc., including the range, quality and clarity.

<sup>4</sup> 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

3.10	Acknowledgement of Scottish Arts Council funding <sup>5</sup>	Programme and website
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<sup>5</sup> The following is an extract from the Scottish Arts Council's conditions of grant for funded organisations:  
"The company should acknowledge Scottish Arts Council funding in press releases, at launches, on all published materials (including leaflets, brochures, programmes, posters, notices display, exhibition materials, websites and advertising). Acknowledgement of the Scottish Arts Council grant must also be made in any secondary or indirect products arising from the revenue funding such as recordings, publications, video, broadcasts, computer programmes etc."  
Please comment on whether these conditions of grant were met, including use and prominence of the Scottish Arts Council logo on the company's website.