Appendix 18: Peer Assessment

* 1. Introduction

A number of professionals working in the culture sector were asked to contribute to the evaluation of ‘Back to Ours’ as Peer Assessors. This was to ensure a third-party objective opinion from the sector, as well as to ensure that the three-tier evaluation of the event, using Arts Council England’s Quality Metrics, was realised.

* + 1. The Peers

In total, eight Peer Assessors were identified to take part in two semi-structured depth interviews pre-visit and post-visit to a sample of ‘Back to Ours’ performances. Seven performances were assessed:

* Once Upon a Pillow Fight, Upswing
* Hotel Paradiso, Lost in Translation Circus
* Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic
* The Amazing Bubbleman, Louis Pearl
* Skin, 201 Dance Company
* Drip, Script Club in partnership with Boundless Theatre
* Bedtime Stories, Upswing

 The Peer Assessors:

* **Lindsey Wood is Deputy Manager at East Durham Trust.** She has experience of working with charities in event and community management.
* **Ruby Thompson is Artistic Director of The Herd –** a theatre company that works with young people of various ages, abilities and backgrounds to create shows that explore and understand their lives.
* **Claire Slattery is Arts and Heritage Manager for Calderdale Council**. As a highly skilled art-professional with many years experience as a Curator and Facilitator, Claire works to enrich the lives of residents and visitors by supporting and promoting arts and heritage.
* **Helen Ball was Yorkshire Woman of the Year 2016** and is Independent Chair of the steering committee bidding for European Capital of Culture Leeds 2023. Since 2012, she has been Chief Executive at Barnsley Civic Enterprise Trust. Her background is predominantly in the public sector with extensive experience in leadership and transformational change.
* **Suzannah Bedford is Creative Director of the Renewal Trust**, a regeneration charity working with communities in Nottingham. With expertise in literature and visual arts, Suzannah has worked with various theatres.
* **Vince Attwood is Co-Director at Soft Touch Arts**, a participatory arts company based in the East Midlands. He spent his early career as an artist/ designer /performer in visual theatre throughout Europe. With Soft Touch he has been instrumental in developing the practice of participatory work particularly with disadvantaged young people both as a practitioner and strategically through national and regional working groups and networks.
* **Alison Denholm has worked at Nottingham based City Arts since 2005**. She is an arts and community engagement specialist, focusing on carnival and outdoor work specifically, but has experience of working on numerous festivals and events.
* **Catherine McDermott worked at the Young Vic and Lyric Hammersmith theatres** before joining Kingston University as Programme Lead. Her work as an independent producer includes projects with the Manchester International Festival, The Work Theatre Collective and on the London Fringe.

All Peer Assessors were sent links to the publicity material and press coverage that took place in the lead up to ‘Back to Ours’, in order to give them a sense of what the project was about and a basis on which to set their expectations for the performance(s) they were going to see.

The templates for the interviews are provided in Appendices 19 and 20.

* **Peer Assessors Discussion Template (Pre-Event):** carried out as telephone interview before they attended the festival; and
* **Peer Assessors Discussion Template (Post-Event):** carried out as telephone interview after they attended the festival.

The focus of the Peer Assessments was as follows:

* **Awareness and / or knowledge of the commissioned artists**: to determine whether expectations were based on any first hand experiences of the artists.
* **Arts Council Quality Metrics:** rating of all Arts Council England Quality Metrics and reasons for these answers, both in terms of expectation pre-event and reactions post-event.
* **Creative Case for Diversity:** perceptions of how diversity would be represented or explored within the commissions and event as a whole from the publicity materials and information shared; and how, in reality, they felt diversity was represented or explored within the commissions and event as a whole.
* **Feedback on Venues:** the extent to which the venues were appropriate for the performances in terms of accessibility, atmosphere, technical set up and facilities.
* **Perceptions of Hull:** shifts in the perceptions of Hull amongst peer assessors, as a result of attending ‘Back to Ours’.
	1. Arts Council Quality Metrics
		1. Overall Rating

As shown in Table X, peer assessors rated ‘Back to Ours’ highly across most of the quality metrics and any changes after the event were marginal.

* Prior to the event the average score for metrics ranged from 6.4 out of 10 to 9.6 out of 10.
* After the event the average score for metrics ranged from 7.4 out of 10 to 10 out of 10.

Prior to attending the event the five top scoring metrics in descending order were:

1. **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
2. **Concept:** It is an interesting idea
3. **Rigour:** It will be well thought through and put together
4. **Enthusiasm:** I will come to something like this again
5. **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work

**Distinctiveness:** It is different from things I’ve experienced before; **Originality:** It will be ground-breakingand **Presentation:** It is well produced and presented were the lowest average scoring metrics prior to attending the festival.

After attending the event the five top scoring metrics in descending order were:

1. **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
2. **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention
3. **Enthusiasm:** I will come to something like this again
4. **Rigour:** It will be well thought through and put together
5. **Concept:** It is an interesting idea

**Originality:** It is ground-breaking**; Originality:** It will be ground-breakingand **Challenge:** It is thought provoking were the lowest average scoring metrics after attending the festival.

Nine of the twelve quality metrics received a greater average score from peer assessors after attending the event:

* **Presentation:** It is well produced and presented
* **Distinctiveness:** It is different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Enthusiasm:** I will come to something like this again
* **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
* **Relevance:** It has something to say about the world in which we live
* **Originality:** It is ground-breaking
* **Excellence:** It is one of the best examples of its type.
* **Rigour:** It is well thought through and put together.

Three of the twelve metrics received a marginally lower average score from peer assessors after attending the event:

* **Concept**: It was an interesting idea
* **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking
* **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work

Reasons given for some of the scores provided post-event included:

* **Concept:** the experience of attending similar things**;**
* **Challenge:** the difference in the content of the shows led to conflicting scores when peers visited more than one performance;
* **Risk:** the fact that artists were performing well-rehearsed touring productions rather than new work.

Overall, the average rating across all twelve Quality Metrics increased from an average of 8.3 to 8.8.

Peer assessors’ own professional experience seemed to have a significant impact on the scores given both prior to and after attending the event.

The metrics with the most diversity, in regard to scoring prior to attending the event were:

* **Distinctiveness:** ranged from 2 to 8 out of 10
* **Relevance:** ranged from 5 to 10 out of 10
* **Captivation:** ranged from 6 to 10 out of 10.

The metrics with the most diversity, in regard to scoring after attending the event were:

* **Challenge:** ranged from 3 to 10 out of 10
* **Risk:** ranged from 2 to 10 out of 10
* **Distinctiveness:** ranged from 0 to 10 out of 10

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Back to Ours Festival as a Whole

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – Back to Ours Festival as a Whole | Pre-Event(n=8) | Post-Event(n=8) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **9.4** | **9.3** | **-0.1** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **7.8** | **8.5** | **+0.7** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **6.4** | **7.4** | **+1.0** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **8.3** | **7.9** | **-0.4** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **8.3** | **9.6** | **+1.3** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **8.6** | **9.5** | **+0.9** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **9.6** | **10.0** | **+0.4** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **8** | **8.9** | **+0.9** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **7.6** | **8.0** | **+0.4** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **8.5** | **8.1** | **-0.4** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.4** | **8.8** | **+0.4** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **9.1** | **9.4** | **+0.3** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **8.3** | **8.8** | **+0.5** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Peer Assessors

Please mark a point on the scale that best represents your level of agreement with the following statements about the Back to Ours Festival as a whole

* + 1. Once Upon a Pillow Fight

Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, peer assessors were asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. Both peer assessors had no previous knowledge of Upswing and have never seen any of their work.

As shown in Table X, Once Upon a Pillow Fight was rated highly by peer assessors both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, average scores for metrics ranged from 6.5 to 9 out of 10 (a difference of 2.5).
* After attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, average scores for metrics ranged from 7 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 3)

Prior to visiting Once Upon a Pillow Fight, the top three Quality Metrics were:

* **Enthusiasm:** I will come to something like this again
* **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
* **Rigour:** It is well thought through and put together.

**Five Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Concept:** It is an interesting idea
* **Presentation:** It is well produced and presented
* **Distinctiveness:** It is different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Relevance:** It has something to say about the world in which we live
* **Excellence:** It is one of the best examples of its type.

**Originality:** It is ground-breaking; **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work and **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking received the lowest average scores before visiting Once Upon a Pillow Fight.

After visiting Once Upon a Pillow Fight, the five top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
* **Enthusiasm:** I will come to something like this again
* **Rigour:** It is well thought through and put together
* **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking
* **Concept:** It is an interesting idea

**Originality:** It is ground-breaking and **Excellence:** It is one of the best examples of its type received the lowest average scores after attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight.

All but two of the Quality Metrics received a higher average score after attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight. The two metrics that received lower scores were:

* **Originality:** It is ground-breaking
* **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work

Overall, the average rating across all twelve Quality Metrics increased from 8 to 8.8 (a difference of 0.8).

The metric that received the largest increase in score was **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking with a pre-visit score of 6.5 and a post visit score of 9.5 (a difference of 3).

When providing reasons for their scores both prior to and after attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, peer assessors gave the following responses.

**Concept**

Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, one peer assessor felt the concept looked like good fun, with the audience watching from beds rather than theatre seats.

After attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, the peer assessors commented on how the concept was very simple yet well executed, with the addition of circus and acrobatics.

*“I loved that it was taking something so familiar and everyday and taking it in a circus direction and acrobatics it was just so magical.”*

*“Such a simple idea - but executed excellently.”*

**Presentation**

After attending the performance, peer assessors described the space as ‘intimate’ and gave positive feedback around the environment created for the audience to experience the show.

*“The visuals were just stunning and it was such an intimate space and the atmosphere was just so good and happy and positive.”*

*“I couldn't fault it.”*

**Distinctiveness**

Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, one peer assessor felt that the audience viewing experience would be distinctive because of the addition of beds rather than seats.

After attending the performance, one peer assessor felt that although they enjoyed the show, it didn’t differ hugely from other shows that they had seen of that type.

*“It was lovely and very much magical experience but I have seen similar performances.”*

**Challenge**

The fact that Once Upon a Pillow Fight was a show aimed at a younger audience meant that peer assessors were unsure about whether it would be challenging or thought-provoking.

*“It's a funny one that, because it's a family show. But I think it will be. It's maybe not wanting all these six year-olds to go away having been challenged. But it looks like it will be fun and live up to the strap line of interactive playfulness and magical experience.”*

After attending the show, peer assessors felt that the show was effective in demonstrating to children a situation that may be familiar to them in an innovative way. They spoke about how children in the audience were ‘mesmerised’ by the performance and felt that they were taking it in and understanding the story.

*“I thought it was excellent that the children got a chance to see a young boy and girl - brother and sister - acting out a fight. So it was an area of being mean and horrible to each other - but at the same time it was handled very playfully - so that they can see that it is ok to fight - as long as you have to make up at the end, and you have to allow space for the girl to be able to fight back in a reasonable way - and I looked at the audience, and all around the children were fascinated by them reading these complex nuances in the dance, and sitting quietly understanding every bit of it. Overall I thought it had a really lovely tone.”*

*“I thought it was excellent that they took such a common story and added the element of such physicality so that children got a chance to see a young boy and girl - brother and sister - acting out a fight. So it was it was handled very playfully - and I looked at the audience, and all around the children were mesmerised.”*

**Captivation**

Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, peer assessors felt that the performance would hold the attention of the children, particularly because of the intimate setting.

*“It's quite an intimate involvement, you're up close and seeing it like theatre in the round - there's no escape by sitting at the back.”*

After attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, peer assessors spoke about how both adults and children in the audience were completely engaged in the performance. They spoke about the complexity and advanced nature of the dance involved and how this challenged the performers.

*“It was very engaging for the little ones. In the context of a children's performance and in terms of thinking about how much they were challenging themselves. I don't think the audience realised just how difficult those moves were and just how challenging it was to make those movements with such dexterity and precision.”*

*“Yes it absolutely held my attention – and everyone I watched also had their eyes glued to it – as an adult I could come in to appreciate the advanced level of the dance – so that was great - it wasn't just pitched at kids - all the adults really enjoyed it too. They were both truly excellent dancers.”*

**Enthusiasm**

Both peer assessors felt that they would attend a performance similar to Once Upon a Pillow fight after attending the show, however one mentioned that it was aimed at a younger audience so this wouldn’t be something they would go to by themselves.

**Local impact**

Both prior to and after attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, peer assessors felt that it was important that the performance happened in a community venue in Hull.

One peer assessor felt that this provided audience members with a genuine opportunity to make new connections with each other in a happy and positive environment.

*“I think that it really was very important that it happened in that local venue – it had a generally happy and nice vibe -and I didn’t get feeling that everyone was coming from one venue (like as if they all had a child at the school there) so it was nice that the audience it was obvious that they didn’t know each other (so it wasn't just one group of parents hogging all the tickets) but then all the children played together afterwards so there was a genuine opportunity for people to get to know each other and make new friends and I thought that was just lovely!”*

**Relevance**

Peer assessors felt that the content of Once Upon a Pillow Fight portrayed a familiar story in many families, which made it relatable to the audience.

*“It is such an everyday story that everyone can relate to.”*

*“Yes bedtime pillow fights amongst siblings is certainly something everyone can relate to I think.”*

**Originality**

Although peer assessors found Once Upon a Pillow Fight enjoyable and captivating, they felt the performance didn’t particularly push boundaries.

*“It was a brilliant captivating performance but I wouldn't say it was pushing boundaries.”*

**Risk**

Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, one peer assessor anticipated there to be an element of physical challenge in the performance, through looking at the promotional photographs for the event.

After attending, peer assessors had a difference in opinion in term of the level of risk in this performance. One peer assessor felt that the performers didn’t really push themselves out of their comfort zones with Once Upon a Pillow Fight, although there was an element of risk in terms of the non-traditional performance setting.

One peer assessor however felt that the complex nature of the dance involved in the performance was very challenging for the artists and any mistakes would potentially break the concentration of the audience and negatively affect the show.

*“Yes absolutely - they played the whole thing out within the confines of dance on a single bed – it was very complicated. The dancers were clearly very skilled because they made things appeared so simple and fluid and easy - but from my knowledge of dance I know they are extremely complex and complicated - and so that is a real talent to make it look so easy and simple. And if either dancer had slipped and fallen then the children would have lost concentration and confidence in them and the spell would have been broken, so yes I do think they were risking and challenging themselves.”*

**Excellence**

Prior to attending Once Upon a Pillow Fight, peer assessors were unsure how to rate the excellence of the performance. After attending, both peer assessors felt that the show was one of the best examples of its type due to the skill of the dancers and the theatrical presentation of the work.

*“It was extremely engaging and there was such a nice theatricality about it in terms of the lighting and projection and shadow.”*

*“They were both excellent dancers.”*

**Rigour**

Both peer assessors felt that Once Upon A Pillow Fight was well thought through and put together. The seating arrangements of the audience received positive feedback, along with the nature of the audience participation in the pillow fight.

The ending of the show was criticised however, as it didn’t have a defined end point, which caused some confusion in the parents and children.

*“I didn’t understand that it had ended - I thought it was just an interval. So I think that should have been made clearer a more defined ending was needed. Obviously it was time appropriate given the age of the children - but I do think that could have been explained better - because it wasn't just me - there were also some parents hanging around and waiting for the second half to start!”*

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Once Upon a Pillow Fight

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – Once Upon A Pillow Fight | Pre-Event(n=2) | Post-Event(n=2) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **8.0** | **9.5** | **+1.5** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **8.0** | **9.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **8.0** | **8.5** | **+0.5** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **6.5** | **9.5** | **+3.0** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **8.0** | **8.0** | **+0.0** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **9.0** | **10.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **9.0** | **10.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **8.0** | **9.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **7.5** | **7.0** | **-0.5** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **7.5** | **8.0** | **+0.5** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.0** | **7.5** | **-0.5** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **8.5** | **9.5** | **+1.0** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **8.0** | **8.8** | **+0.8** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Once Upon a Pillow Fight

* + 1. SKIN

Prior to attending SKIN, peer assessors were asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. Both peer assessors had no previous knowledge of 201 Dance Company and have never seen any of their work.

As shown in Table X, SKIN was rated highly by peer assessors both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending SKIN, average scores for metrics ranged from 8 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 2).
* After attending SKIN, average scores for metrics ranged from 8.5 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 1.5)

Prior to visiting SKIN, the top three Quality Metrics were:

* **Distinctiveness**: It will be different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Challenge:** It will be thought-provoking
* **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
* **Relevance:** It has something to say about the world in which we live
* **Risk:** The artists are really challenging themselves with the work.

**Two Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking

**Excellence**: It will be one of the best examples of its type; **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again and **Rigour:** It will be well thought through and put together received the lowest average scores before visiting Skin.

After visiting SKIN, the five top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact: It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)**
* **Relevance**: It had something to say about the world in which we live
* **Presentation:** It was well produced and presented
* **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work
* **Excellence:** It was one of the best examples of its type

**Originality:** It is ground-breaking received the lowest average scores after attending Skin.

Four of the Quality Metrics received a higher average score after attending Skin. The five metrics that received lower scores were:

* **Distinctiveness: It was different from things I’ve experienced before**
* **Challenge:** It was thought-provoking
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking
* **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work

Overall, the average rating across all twelve Quality Metrics remained the same at 9.3.

The metric that received the largest increase in score was **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type with a pre-visit score of 8 and a post visit score of 9.5 (a difference of 1.5).

When providing reasons for their scores both prior to and after attending Skin, peer assessors gave the following responses.

**Concept**

Prior to attending the performance, the concept of SKIN was described as ‘brave’, ‘sensitive’ and ‘impactful’ by peer assessors, who were interested to see how an audience would receive this and whether it would spark any debate or discussion.

*“I think it is extremely interesting – the subject matter is so sensitive and impactful and has the potential to bring so much debate and discussion I am so interested to see how it is received by the audience.”*

**Presentation**

One peer assessor anticipated SKIN to be well produced and presented based on their previous experience of Hull 2017 events. After attending, both peer assessors felt that the performance had high production values, with excellent costume and dancing.

*“It was a very simple set, and excellent dancing and the costumes were excellent. The whole thing had a very polished feel - you could see that the dancers were very confident and well rehearsed.”*

*“Very well produced and presented very high production values and the skill of the dancers was excellent.”*

One peer assessor commented on some technical difficulties during the performance, which actually caused some audience members to leave.

*“The only real problem was that there were some technical difficulties with the sound - there was a really loud buzzing and a couple of people walked out because of it, which is a real shame.”*

**Distinctiveness**

Prior to attending SKIN, peer assessors felt the mix of hip-hop and theatre with the underlying theme of gender transition would be distinctive, and were intrigued about how this might be represented in a performance context.

*“I’ve never seen or heard of a cross over between hip hop, theatre, gender transition I think it sounds fascinating and highly unusual.”*

**Challenge**

Peer assessors anticipated the performance to be very thought-provoking due to the sensitive theme of gender. After attending SKIN, one peer assessor felt the performance challenged any preconceptions they may have had about hip-hop and the subject matter

*“Yes you think you know what hip-hop is going to be about and it made me question all my preconceptions and stereotypes.”*

One peer assessor commented on the mix of ages in the audience and wondered how the performance provoked different reactions in the different groups.

**Captivation**

Peer assessors felt that SKIN held the audience’s attention and there was a good atmosphere. One peer assessor felt that although the performance had a gripping beginning, the piece didn’t have a good flow.

*“Lots of incredible breath-taking moments - but then there were also points that I feel got lost along the way - or some bits just seemed to take too long. I think the start delivered such a fantastic punch that there was a lot of waiting around for another to come up.”*

**Enthusiasm**

After attending SKIN, both peer assessors were enthusiastic about attending something similar in the future. One peer assessor, who was more sceptical prior to attending, felt that their experience has encouraged them to take a risk on this type of performance going forwards.

*“Yes I thought it was not going to be my kind of thing but I was pleasantly surprised and it did make me think I might be more likely to take a risk and go and see something like this in future!”*

**Local impact**

Both prior to and after attending SKIN, peer assessors felt that it was important that it was held in a community venue within Hull. One peer assessor felt that the performance had recognisable elements comparable to a mainstream dance act, but combined challenging themes, which meant that SKIN was accessible to this local audience.

*“I think to have something of that quality hosted in a local community and to combine recognisable elements like 'Britain's got Talent' diversity style movements with more subversive matter was amazing - really spot on mix.”*

**Relevance**

Peer assessors felt that the themes explored in SKIN were relevant to the world we live in and are extremely important to talk about.

*“Yes the theme of how we treat women in the world today and particularly those who do not identify as cisgender could not be more relevant.”*

**Originality**

Bringing together hip-hop, contemporary dance and gender themes alongside the concept of hosting SKIN in a community venue with a local audience was seen as ground breaking by one peer assessor.

*“I did feel at points I have never seen anything like this before - and for me that is truly refreshing - to see such innovative ways of fusing 2 different genres together so seamlessly.”*

**Risk**

Peer assessors felt that portraying the sensitive subject matter through contemporary dance had some element of risk in terms of how a new and potentially disengaged audience would react.

*“Never know how it is going to go down - contemporary dance is always risky - but in this context even more so.”*

**Excellence**

After attending SKIN, peer assessors felt that the performance was one of the best examples of its kind. One assessor stated that the only reason the performance didn’t receive 10 out of 10 for excellence was because of slight structural issues.

*“There was a bit of work needed to be done on the structure which is the only reason why I've not given it a 10.”*

**Rigour**

Prior to attending the performance, peer assessors expected SKIN to be well thought through and put together. After attending, one peer assessor commented on the cohesiveness of the dance troop, stating that they worked extremely well as a team, which reflected in the quality of the performance.

*“Yes they were all very in sync and it was clear that the dance troop will have been working together for some time - they all worked extremely well as a team.”*

One peer assessor commented on the care and attention festival organisers had put into the planning and organisation of the performance, which meant she had a comfortable and enjoyable experience.

*“They had clearly taken great care of every tiny little thing and that made such a tremendous amount of difference.”*

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – SKIN

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – SKIN | Pre-Event(n=2) | Post-Event(n=2) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **9.0** | **9.0** | **+0.0** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **9.0** | **9.5** | **+0.5** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **10.0** | **9.0** | **-1.0** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **10.0** | **9.0** | **-1.0** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **9.5** | **9.0** | **-0.5** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **8.5** | **9.0** | **+0.5** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **10.0** | **10.0** | **0.0** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **10.0** | **10.0** | **0.0** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **9.5** | **8.5** | **-1.0** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **10.0** | **9.5** | **-0.5** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.0** | **9.5** | **+1.5** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **8.5** | **9.0** | **+0.5** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **9.3** | **9.3** | **0.0** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – SKIN

* + 1. Drip

Prior to attending Drip, peer assessors were asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. Both peer assessors had no previous knowledge of Script Club in partnership with Boundless Theatre and have never seen any of their work.

As shown in Table X, Drip was rated highly by peer assessors both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending Drip, average scores for metrics ranged from 7.7 to 9.7 out of 10 (a difference of 2).
* After attending Drip, average scores for metrics ranged from 5.3 to 9.7 out of 10 (a difference of 4.4)

Prior to visiting Drip, the top three Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact:** It is important that it's happening here (in Hull community venues)
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together
* **Presentation:** It was well produced and presented

**Two Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live

**Challenge:**It was thought-provoking; **Risk**: The artists were really challenging themselves with the work and **Originality:**It was ground-breakingreceived the lowest average scores before visiting Drip.

After visiting Drip, the five top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together

**Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before received the lowest average scores after attending Drip.

Four of the Quality Metrics received a higher average score after attending Skin. The six metrics that received lower scores were:

* **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Presentation**: It was well produced and presented
* **Challenge:** It was thought-provoking
* **Relevance:** It had something to say about the world in which we live
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking
* **Excellence**: It was be one of the best examples of its type
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together

Overall, the average rating across all twelve Quality Metrics decreased from 8.5 to 8.3 (difference of -0.2).

The metric that received the largest increase in score was **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the workwith a pre-visit score of 8 and a post visit score of 9.3 (a difference of 1.3).

When providing reasons for their scores both prior to and after attending Drip, peer assessors gave the following responses.

**Concept**

Prior to attending Drip, peer assessors felt that the concept would be interesting and challenging and would raise questions about sexuality and growing up.

*“I am aware of the concepts being challenging in that it will raise questions about sexuality and growing up when you are questioning your sexuality and the kinds of reactions that you can expect to encounter from your family and wider society.”*

After attending the performance, one peer assessor felt that the concept wasn’t innovative as they first expected, because it was something they’d seen previously.

**Presentation**

Prior to attending Drip, peer assessors stressed the importance of the performance being well produced and presented because it was a one-man show.

*“I believe he is a one-man writer, musician, director, performer and that is very hard to be good at all of those things.”*

Peer assessors gave positive feedback about the presentation of Drip after attending the show, however one respondent felt that more attention could have been given to the venue, as it felt too much like a classroom space.

**Distinctiveness**

From an audience perspective, peer assessors felt that Drip’s one-man show format would be different to anything they had seen before.

Opinions were mixed after attending the show, with one peer assessor feeling that the audience participation meant that the show was completely distinct and different. The other peer assessors felt that as regular theatre-goers, they couldn’t describe Drip as distinctive.

*“Because of the creation of the audience as being a part of the show meant that it became very much like a community experience. The whole subject matter was completely distinct and different and then to incorporate all of that into a one-man comedy guitar performance.”*

**Challenge**

The themes and subjects covered in Drip, alongside the one-man format was felt to be thought-provoking by peer assessors.

After attending the performance, peer assessors felt that Drip raised questions and offered alternative viewpoints to topics such as gender and growing up. One peer assessor felt that the rapport built with the artist and a predominantly older audience, combined with a story centred on youth, made for a challenging and thought-provoking performance.

*“He had a great rapport with the audience of mainly older people– they were enthralled by a young person, performing about a youthful set of issues, and how they are affecting this young person – was taken on well.”*

**Captivation**

Peer assessors gave positive feedback on the ability of the performer to captivate and engage the audience, particularly given that he was fairly young and alone on the stage.

*“One person shows can employ different techniques and are usually only undertaken by more established performers who have had more experienced. He was completely on his own and he handled that very well.”*

**Enthusiasm**

After attending Drip, all peer assessors agreed that they would be interested in going to something similar in the future.

One peer assessor initially thought that because the performance was to be held in a school venue, it would be an amateur production. After attending Drip, they were impressed with the organisation and quality of the show and stated that they would go and see something like this again.

**Local impact**

Although one peer assessor felt Drip could have been located in a better space within the venue, there was clear support for the concept of using a community building for the performance.

One peer assessor felt this would have impact in the local community, as it enabled local people to feel involved in Hull’s City of Culture celebrations. Another felt that the fact the story was set in a school and was performed within a real classroom added to the experience.

*“Showing this in a local school setting is a really unusual twist - especially when the performance itself is also set in a school - and so it is another way of expressing ideas that you do not usually come across in a one-man musical comedy.”*

**Relevance**

Both prior and after attending Drip, peer assessors felt that the performance had relevance to the world today due to the issues raised around growing up and sexuality. One peer assessor felt that content of the performance was relatable to all audiences.

*“I think is a lovely and gentle approach to a thought-provoking concept.”*

*“I could see some adults pleasantly surprised show was still relevant to them.”*

**Originality**

Opinions around Drip’s originality were mixed prior to attending the performance. After attending, peer assessors felt that although Drip was a good piece of theatre, it couldn’t be described as ground breaking in terms of the technical specification and props used.

*“It was a strong engaging piece of theatre but not ‘ground breaking’.”*

*“Technically nothing spectacular in the use of projection and projection screens – and use of small amount of props but these things are common in theatre.”*

One peer assessor however, felt that the school setting added to the originality of the experience.

**Risk**

Prior to attending Drip, peer assessors felt that the artist would be challenging himself with the work, given that they were a solo performer in a show that relied on audience interaction.

*“The artist will be taking a huge risk because in a solo performance audience interaction is hugely important.”*

After attending Drip, one peer assessor felt that the unconventional venue gave an added challenge to the performance, combined with a subject matter that audience members may find challenging.

*“I would say yes as the venue was very challenging and the solo performer had to work very hard to keep the audience engaged in subject matter that people may not have wanted to explore.”*

**Excellence**

Prior to attending Drip, two out of three peer assessors fully anticipated that the performance would be one of the best examples of its type and one was undecided.

After attending the performance one peer assessor felt that they had seen pieces that were on par or better than Drip, however another felt that for the artist’s youth and level experience, the performance was excellent.

*“For such a young performer he is a less experienced actor and a less experienced writer and yet he really is at top of the game he did it really well yes he was excellent.”*

**Rigour**

Both before and after attending Drip, peer assessors felt that the performance was well thought through and delivered by the solo performer.

*“It kept pace and was delivered very well by a solo performer.”*

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Drip

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – Drip | Pre-Event(n=3) | Post-Event(n=3) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **8.3** | **8.7** | **+0.4** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **9.0** | **8.7** | **-0.3** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **8.3** | **5.3** | **-3.0** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **8.0** | **7.7** | **-0.3** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **8.3** | **9.3** | **-1.0** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **8.7** | **9.3** | **+0.6** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **9.7** | **9.7** | **0.0** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **8.7** | **8.3** | **-0.4** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **7.7** | **6.3** | **-1.4** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **8.0** | **9.3** | **+1.3** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.3** | **7.3** | **-1.0** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **9.3** | **9.0** | **-0.3** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **8.5** | **8.2** | **-0.5** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Drip

* + 1. Bedtime Stories

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, the peer assessors were asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. One of the peer assessors had no previous knowledge of Upswing and have never seen any of their work, the other had previous knowledge of Upswing, but had not seen any of their work.

As shown in Table X, Bedtime Stories was rated highly by peer assessors both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, average scores for metrics ranged from 6 to 9 out of 10 (a difference of 3).
* After attending Bedtime Stories, average scores for metrics ranged from 3.5 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 6.5)

Prior to visiting Bedtime Stories, the top three Quality Metrics were:

* **Concept:** It was an interesting idea
* **Presentation:** It was well produced and presented
* **Local impact**: It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)

**Five Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Distinctiveness**: It was different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together
* **Excellence:** It was be one of the best examples of its type
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention

**Challenge:**It was thought-provoking; **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live and **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the workreceived the lowest average scores before visiting Bedtime Stories.

After visiting Bedtime Stories, the four top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)
* **Concept:** It was an interesting idea
* **Presentation**: It was well produced and presented
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again

**Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before received the lowest average scores after attending Bedtime Stories.

Ten of the Quality Metrics received a higher average score after attending Bedtime Stories. The two metrics that received lower scores were:

* **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking

Overall, the average rating across all twelve Quality Metrics increased from 8 to 8.3 (difference of 0.3).

The metric that received the largest increase in score was **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live with a pre-visit score of 6.5 and a post visit score of 9 (a difference of 2.5).

When providing reasons for their scores both prior to and after attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors gave the following responses.

**Concept**

One peer assessor had previous knowledge of the artists Upswing and anticipated their work would be engaging and dynamic.

After attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors felt the concept was interesting and relatable because it portrayed the familiar theme of a parent trying to balance work and life.

*“I loved how they took a simple yet all too common matter of a parent trying to balance work and life and presented it in such an absorbing and engaging way.”*

**Presentation**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors expected it to be well presented with good production value.

*“I am expecting a very high level of production technical skill and circus skills.”*

After attending the performance, assessors described Bedtime Stories as ‘visually stunning’ and commented on the use of the performance space.

*“Visually stunning and excellent production values.”*

**Distinctiveness**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, one peer assessor felt that the immersive audience setting made the show distinct from anything they’d seen before.

*“It look like the whole audience are tucked up in bed, so there's an immersive quality to it.”*

After attending the performance, one peer assessor said that it didn’t stand out against anything they’d seen before, because their personal background meant that they attend theatre regularly and had seen lots of different examples of work.

**Challenge**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors didn’t expect the piece to be particularly challenging or thought-provoking, with one respondent feeling that that the show appeared to be ‘too friendly’ to push people.

*“’It’s too friendly to be pushing people hard.”*

After attending, peer assessors had differing opinions, with one stating that the performance helped to address a common theme amongst parents in the audience, whilst still entertaining the children. Another peer assessor didn’t feel that the performance set out to be thought-provoking.

*“It struck a great balance between entertaining the children and engaging their adults with the challenge of ‘work life balance’.”*

**Captivation**

Prior to attending the performance, peer assessors expected Bedtime Stories to be absorbing and capture their attention. After experiencing the show, both peer assessors said that they felt fully engaged with the performance, along with the wider audience.

*“Bedtime stories even though the main premise was dance – it was visually stunning – and the story within it was very engaging for both kids and parents.”*

**Enthusiasm**

Both prior to and after attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors felt that they would be happy to attend something similar in the future.

*“Anyone who went to it would have said yes that is really good I would go to see something like this again.”*

**Local impact**

Both prior to and after attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors felt it was important that it was hosted in a community venue. It was felt that taking work the work out to different venues made it more accessible to new audiences.

One peer assessor felt that the ‘wow-factor’ of the circus skills combined with an accessible storyline made this show successful in the community.

*“Yes definitely as contemporary circus elements had the wow factor to engage audience whilst the narrative was accessible and entertaining.”*

**Relevance**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors anticipated that the show wouldn’t be particularly relevant to the world we live in, expecting it more to be a piece of light touch family entertainment.

*“With it being a children's show I'm not sure how much capacity to say something relevant about the world live in.”*

 After attending the show, peer assessors felt that Bedtime Stories explored relevant themes around what it means to be a parent and family dynamics. One assessor also commented on how the show got families out together on a Saturday morning to experience theatre.

*“Definitely. Accessible commentary on what it means to be a parent and family dynamics.”*

**Originality**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, one peer assessor felt that being original and ground-breaking wasn’t an important aim for this piece of work.

After attending the performance, one peer assessor felt that Bedtime Stories couldn’t be described as ground-breaking, however another felt that the combination of contemporary circus aspects with a narrative made this an original piece of work.

*“[Bedtime Stories] was a very strong and excellent piece of work that presented contemporary circus aspects with a narrative which is excellent for Circus as an art form to me moving that way in the UK.”*

**Risk**

Both prior to and after attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors didn’t feel as though the artists were necessarily challenging themselves with the work, because they were experienced and competent in that type of performance and were within their comfort zone.

*“The company were comfortable with their audience and the work was pitched appropriately for who was there. I wouldn’t say they challenged themselves – more that they took what they do best to new audiences.”*

**Excellence**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors anticipated that it would be an excellent piece of work.

After attending the performance, the assessors described Bedtime Stories as a very good example of dance storytelling and an excellent piece of high quality family work.

*“Yes an excellent example of high quality family work.”*

**Rigour**

Prior to attending Bedtime Stories, peer assessors had high expectations that the show would be well thought through and put together.

After attending the show one peer assessor noted the audience reaction, commenting on the ability of the artists to engage even the youngest children, describing the audience as ‘mesmerised’ and ‘enthralled’.

*“The audience was mesmerised - I spent a long time looking at faces, and they were all engaged - and dance piece in particular was aimed at young kids - and none of them had to be taken out – none were not paying attention - they were all enthralled… It had a wide ranging appeal considering aimed at family.”*

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Bedtime Stories

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – Bedtime Stories | Pre-Event(n=2) | Post-Event(n=2) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **9.0** | **9.5** | **+0.5** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **9.0** | **9.5** | **+0.5** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **8.5** | **3.5** | **-5.0** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **6.0** | **7.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **8.5** | **10.0** | **+1.5** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **8.5** | **9.5** | **+1.0** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **9.0** | **10.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **6.5** | **9.0** | **+2.5** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **7.0** | **6.5** | **-0.5** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **6.5** | **7.0** | **+0.5** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.5** | **9.0** | **+0.5** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **8.5** | **9.0** | **+0.5** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **8.0** | **8.3** | **+0.3** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Bedtime Stories

* + 1. The Amazing Bubble Man

Prior to attending The Amazing Bubble Man, the peer assessor was asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. The peer assessor had no previous knowledge of Louis Pearl and had never seen any of his work.

As shown in Table X, The Amazing Bubble Man was rated highly by the peer assessor both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending The Amazing Bubble Man, scores for metrics ranged from 2 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 8).
* After attending The Amazing Bubble Man, scores for metrics ranged from 2 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 8)

Prior to visiting The Amazing Bubble Man, the top three Quality Metrics were:

* **Captivation:** It will be absorbing and held my attention
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Local impact**: It is important that it is happening here (in the community venues in Hull)

**Three Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Distinctiveness**: It will be different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Originality:** It will be ground-breaking
* **Excellence:** It will be one of the best examples of its type

**Relevance:**It has something to say about the world in which we live; **Challenge:**It will be thought-provoking and **Concept:** It is an interesting ideareceived the lowest scores before visiting The Amazing Bubble Man.

After visiting The Amazing Bubble Man, the three top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)
* Captivation: It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Excellence:** It was one of the best examples of its type

**Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the workreceived the lowest score after The Amazing Bubble Man.

Three of the Quality Metrics received a higher score after attending The Amazing Bubble. The six metrics that received lower scores were:

* **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking
* **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together

Overall, the rating across all twelve Quality Metrics decreased from 6.8 to 6.5 (difference of -0.3).

The metric that received the largest increase in score was **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live with a pre-visit score of 2 and a post visit score of 6 (a difference of 4).

When providing reasons for their scores both prior to and after attending Bedtime Stories, the peer assessor gave the following responses.

**Concept**

Prior to attending The Amazing Bubbleman, the peer assessor expected the performance to be a spectacle, however wouldn’t necessarily have an interesting concept because its lack of narrative.

After attending the performance, the peer assessor agreed that it was visually exciting and engaging, however maintained that there could have been more of a narrative or story to the show.

*“It was fun and surprising and visually exciting but could have incorporated narrative and maybe other ways of using bubbles in performance to make it more original.”*

**Presentation**

Prior to attending The Amazing Bubbleman, the peer assessor felt unable to comment on the presentation of the performance without experiencing it.

After attending the show, the assessor felt that the show was an interesting watch, however didn’t have a huge amount of production value. They suggested that the use of lighting and sound would have added to the experience of the show.

*“There wasn't a huge amount of production value, it might have been fun to see how set, music and light could have lifted it. But with the absence of it, it shows that it was still an interesting watch.”*

**Distinctiveness**

Prior to attending, the peer assessor spoke about witnessing street theatre involving bubbles, but expected The Amazing Bubbleman would be different because it was a full production.

After attending however, they felt that the show wasn’t very different to pieces of street theatre they had experienced in the past, so it couldn’t particularly be described as distinctive.

*“It wasn't that different to street theatre that I've seen before.”*

**Challenge**

Both prior to and after attending the performance, the peer assessor felt that The Amazing Bubbleman wasn’t necessarily challenging or thought provoking for audiences, but didn’t believe that this was one of its primary aims.

*“I had a lovely time and enjoyed the interaction and seeing people willing to get up, but in terms of content it didn't really make me think.”*

**Captivation**

Before attending the performance, the peer assessor expected the work to be a spectacle that would absorb their attention. After attending, the peer assessor felt that although the show was exciting and the artist was talented, the content became predictable after the first ten minutes.

**Enthusiasm**

Prior to attending the show, the peer assessor had enthusiasm to see something similar to The Amazing Bubbleman in the future. After attending, they added that there would have to be another element to the performance other than bubbles for them to want to see something similar again.

*“I would go again but only if it was using bubbles and something else to make a performance.”*

**Local impact**

The peer assessor supported the concept of hosting arts and culture performances in community venues, both prior to and after attending The Amazing Bubbleman.

The peer assessor felt that although the audience had an enjoyable experience however, this particular show was unlikely to influence them to become regular theatregoers.

*“It was great that disadvantaged children had access to this and they had a lovely time, but I don't think that was a show that would influence them to become a regular theatre goer or cultural visitor.”*

**Relevance**

Prior to attending the performance, the peer assessor didn’t feel as though the show would have anything to say about the world we live in because they anticipated it to be purely spectacle with no real meaning.

After attending the performance however, the peer assessor felt the show explored how the pursuit of happiness was worthwhile and demonstrated how joy can bring people together.

*“It wasn't addressed directly in the content but it's an example of how joy brings people together. It said something about happiness and how the pursuit of happiness was worthwhile. He was an inspiring guy.”*

**Originality**

Prior to attending The Amazing Bubbleman, the peer assessor felt that the show would be unalike anything they’d seen because they had never witnessed a full performance about bubbles.

After attending, the peer assessor felt that they had nothing similar to compare the show to, but would have liked an added element to make it stand out from street theatre.

*“I've never seen a bubble show before so have nothing to compare it to, but it would have been nice to see something extra to make it stand out from street theatre.”*

**Risk**

The peer assessor didn’t feel able to comment on the level of risk in The Amazing Bubbleman before experiencing the show.

After they had attended, they felt that the artist wasn’t challenging himself as he was well within his comfort zone, performing internationally touring work that he had been practicing over 30 years.

*“No because he's been doing it for 30 years and it's a ready made internationally touring show.”*

**Excellence**

Prior to attending The Amazing Bubbleman, the peer assessor expected it be of high quality due to their experience of other shows at the ‘Back to Ours’ festival.

After the show, the peer assessor felt that although they hadn’t experienced any other bubble shows for comparison, the skill of the artist and his ability to build rapport with the audience was impressive.

*“It was the first example of work I've seen of its type and his skill and rapport with the audience was very impressive.”*

 **Rigour**

Based on previous experience of ‘Back to Ours’, the peer assessor expected the producers to have curated a programme of work that was well thought through and put together.

After attending The Amazing Bubbleman, the peer assessor felt that the performance was well planned and delivered smoothly, however would have been better with a greater production value.

*“It was slick, his equipment was all ready and he knew what he was doing, he was in control, but I wonder if there was some more production value that would have made it even better.”*

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – The Amazing Bubble Man

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – The Amazing Bubble Man | Pre-Event(n=1) | Post-Event(n=1) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **4.0** | **7.0** | **+3.0** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **5.0** | **6.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **8.0** | **7.0** | **-1.0** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **3.0** | **3.0** | **0.0** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **10.0** | **9.0** | **-1.0** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **10.0** | **7.0** | **-3.0** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **10.0** | **10.0** | **0.0** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **2.0** | **6.0** | **+4.0** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **8.0** | **6.0** | **-2.0** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **5.0** | **2.0** | **-3.0** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **9.0** | **7.0** | **-2.0** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **6.8** | **6.5** | **-0.3** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – The Amazing Bubble Man

* + 1. Hotel Paradiso

Prior to attending Hotel Paradiso, the peer assessors were asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. The peer assessors had no previous knowledge of Lost in Translation Circus and had never seen any of their work.

As shown in Table X, Hotel Paradiso was rated highly by the peer assessors both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending Hotel Paradiso, scores for metrics ranged from 6.5 to 9.5 out of 10 (a difference of 3).
* After attending Hotel Paradiso, scores for metrics ranged from 8 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 2)

Prior to visiting Hotel Paradiso, the top three Quality Metrics were:

* **Presentation**: It was well produced and presented
* **Captivation:** It will be absorbing and held my attention
* **Local impact**: It is important that it is happening here (in the community venues in Hull)

**Five Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Concept:** It was an interesting idea
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Relevance**: It had something to say about the world in which we live
* **Originality:** It will be ground-breaking
* **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together

**Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before; **Challenge:**It will be thought-provoking and **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its typereceived the lowest scores before visiting Hotel Paradiso.

After visiting Hotel Paradiso, the seven top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Concept:** It was an interesting idea
* **Presentation:** It was well produced and presented
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking
* **Excellence:** It was one of the best examples of its type

**Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live received the lowest score after Hotel Paradiso.

Eleven of the Quality Metrics received a higher score after attending Hotel Paradiso. The one metrics that received an equal score was:

* **Relevance:** It had something to say about the world in which we live

Overall, the rating across all twelve Quality Metrics increased from 8.1 to 9.6 (difference of 1.5).

The two metric that received the largest increase in score were **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before and **Excellence:** It was be one of the best examples of its type with a pre-visit scores of 6.5 and 7.5 and post visit scores of 10 (a difference of 2.5).

When providing reasons for their scores both prior to and after attending Hotel Paradiso, the peer assessors gave the following responses.

**Concept**

Prior to attending Hotel Paradiso, one peer assessor felt unable to comment on its concept until they had seen the work. Another peer assessor anticipated it would be an easy watch due to the familiarity of circus performance.

*“I think it will be a very easy watch. It's very easy to engage with and something that's very familiar because anybody that's every gone to a circus are going to be able to relate or understand the content.”*

After experiencing the performance, the peer assessors felt that it was an interesting concept, particularly because it was done within a school building.

**Presentation**

Both peer assessors expected Hotel Paradiso to be well produced and presented based on the promotional information they had seen prior to attending the performance.

After attending the performance, peer assessors felt that the show ran smoothly and professionally, describing the artists as ‘skillful’.

*“The performance was very slick, it all seemed to run to plan. There was no obvious errors or mistakes and if there were they were dealt with professionally. Yeah, it was a professional performance that I would pay money to go and see.”*

*“It was skillfully accomplished in all its elements.”*

Both peer assessors spoke about issues with seating whilst attending Hotel Paradiso. One assessor said there weren’t enough seats for the full audience, so several people had to stand throughout. Another said that those who were seated had poor sightlines of the stage, so some chose to stand up to get a better view.

*“That was a bit frustrating because we did all have tickets, so if they'd known how may people were coming, they might have had enough seats.”*

**Distinctiveness**

Prior to attending the performance, one peer assessor didn’t expect Hotel Paradiso to be different from anything they’d seen before because of their background in the arts, which meant that they had already seen a lot of work.

Another peer assessor felt that they couldn’t judge how distinct this performance would be until after they’d experienced it.

*“I have seen quite a lot of work and I have probably seen similar things*.”

After attending Hotel Paradiso, both peer assessors felt that the school venue helped to make the performance stand out from others that they had seen.

*“Obviously some elements of it were quite in different in terms of how they used the school.”*

**Challenge**

Prior to attending Hotel Paradiso, peer assessors were unsure about how challenging the performance would be. One peer assessor felt that the experience would be challenging because they hadn’t seen any work in the circus genre for a long time.

After experiencing the show, one peer assessor felt that the way the space was used within the unique venue was thought-provoking. Another felt that the physical nature of the performance was the focus of the show, so there was less emphasis on challenging content.

*“It was a very different type of performance being held in a school - utilising the walls and all those types of things it was a unique space, it wasn't just an auditorium, they used the windows so it looked like the hotel floors, that was really thought-provoking.”*

*“It was thought provoking but it was a piece of very physical visual theatre, so the emphasis was more on that rather than challenging content.”*

**Captivation**

Prior to attending the performance, peer assessors expected Hotel Paradiso to be captivating.

After attending, both peer assessors felt that the performance was visually spectacular and fully absorbed their attention. One assessor gave positive feedback on the addition of live music to the show and another spoke about how the performance was continually different and engaging throughout.

*“Spectacle, visually. The music was very good, it's really nice to have live music in the space.”*

*“It was just very, very different all the time, there was some very spectacular things and comical parts.”*

**Enthusiasm**

Both peer assessors were unable to comment on whether they would like to see something similar before they had experienced it.

After attending, both assessors were enthusiastic about attending something like Hotel Paradiso in the future.

**Local impact**

Both prior to and after attending Hotel Paradiso, peer assessors felt that it was important that it was happening in a local community venue, because it would help reach out to audiences who may be disengaged.

*“What I know about the local area and probably lack of participation in the area, then work like that is definitely going to reach out to the local people.”*

**Relevance**

One peer assessor felt unable to judge the relevance of the piece before experiencing the performance. Another peer assessor expected the show to have some link to relevant current issues and felt that this was an important way to encourage people to engage.

*“I think for performances like this there's a need to, with current issues, it's an easy way to make people engage with current issues, and generally these performances would have a link.”*

After attending Hotel Paradiso, peer assessors didn’t feel that the performance necessarily had anything to say about the world in which we live, with one assessor describing it as ‘fantastical’ rather than relevant.

*“It was a kind of fantastical piece of work and great for being so, but therefore it's quite hard to rate it's relevance at the top.”*

**Originality**

Both peer assessors were unsure about the originality of the performance prior to attending.

After they had experienced Hotel Paradiso, assessors felt that the work was ground-breaking, with one citing the use of the performance space as a reason for this.

**Risk**

Prior to attending, peer assessors didn’t feel able to comment on the level of risk involved in the performance.

After attending, peer assessors felt that the artists were challenging themselves with the work, with one mentioning the physical nature of the performance as a reason for this.

*“I would say the physical challenge was palpable.”*

**Excellence**

Prior to attending, both peer assessors didn’t were unsure whether Hotel Paradiso would be one of the best examples of its type.

After attending, both assessors felt the performance was excellent and professional.

**Rigour**

Based on the promotional material seen prior to attending Hotel Paradiso, one peer assessor anticipated the performance would be well planned and put together.

After attending, peer assessors rated Hotel Paradiso high on rigour. One assessor spoke about how the experience was well thought through, from the red carpet at the entrance to the evaluation method as the audience was leaving.

*“There was a piece at the very start that were performing in the crowd as people from that era of the performance, so that was entertaining. The way that they had a red carpet outside the venue and what was really really good as well, for feedback they had a lady at the door with an old fashioned thing that you would get popcorn in and you put in your token and you got a sweet and I think that was really ingenious, it was really good.”*

One peer assessor however, stated that the role and purpose of the volunteer performers at the beginning of the show was unclear and appeared to be disjointed from the rest of the performance. They also mentioned that the way the volunteer cast interacted with the audience could potentially make people feel uncomfortable.

*“So they looked fantastic and they acted really well, but there was a kind of disjuncture between what they were doing and what happened on stage. So some sort of bridging moment was missing between their contribution and the company's work…That's quite a big step for people who aren't familiar with things in that area, that could be quite in your face. And I think for some people, watching their body language, I think they found it a bit challenging.”*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – Hotel Paradiso | Pre-Event(n=2) | Post-Event(n=2) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **8.0** | **10.0** | **+2.0** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **9.5** | **10.0** | **+0.5** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **6.5** | **9.0** | **+2.5** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **7.5** | **9.5** | **+2.0** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **8.5** | **10.0** | **+1.5** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **8.0** | **10.0** | **+2.0** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **9.5** | **10.0** | **+0.5** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **8.0** | **10.0** | **+2.0** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **8.0** | **9.5** | **+1.5** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **7.5** | **10.0** | **+2.5** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **8.0** | **9.5** | **+1.5** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **8.1** | **9.6** | **+1.5** |

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Hotel Paradiso

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Hotel Paradiso

* + 1. Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic

Prior to attending Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic, the peer assessor was asked if they had seen previous work by the artist; had previous knowledge of the artist but had not seen any of their work; or if they had neither seen work by nor had previous knowledge of the artist. The peer assessor had no previous knowledge of Jed or Gary and had never seen any of their work.

As shown in Table X, Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic was rated highly by the peer assessor both before and after attending the performance:

* Prior to attending Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic, scores for metrics ranged from 8 to 9 out of 10 (a difference of 1).
* After attending Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic, scores for metrics ranged from 8 to 10 out of 10 (a difference of 2)

Prior to visiting Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic, the top two Quality Metrics were:

* **Presentation**: It was well produced and presented
* **Local impact**: It is important that it is happening here (in the community venues in Hull)

**Ten Quality Metrics then received equal scores:**

* **Concept:** It was an interesting idea
* **Distinctiveness:** It was different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Challenge:** It was thought-provoking
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Relevance**: It had something to say about the world in which we live
* **Originality:** It will be ground-breaking
* **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work
* **Excellence**: It was be one of the best examples of its type
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together

The ten Quality Metrics listed above received the lowest scores before visiting Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic.

After visiting Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic, the five top scoring Quality Metrics were:

* **Local impact:** It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull)
* **Concept:** It was an interesting idea
* **Presentation:** It was well produced and presented
* **Captivation:** It was absorbing and held my attention
* **Enthusiasm:** I would come to something like it again
* **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work

**The following Quality Metrics** received the lowest score after Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic:

* **Distinctiveness**: It was different from things I’ve experienced before
* **Challenge:** It was thought-provoking
* **Enthusiasm**: I would come to something like it again
* **Relevance:** It had something to say about the world in which we live
* **Originality:** It was ground-breaking
* **Excellence:** It was be one of the best examples of its type
* **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together

Four of the Quality Metrics received a higher score after attending Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic. None of the Quality Metrics received a lower score.

Overall, the rating across all twelve Quality Metrics increased from 8.2 to 8.5 (difference of 0.3).

The four metrics that received the largest increase in score were **Concept:** It was an interesting idea, **Captivation**: It was absorbing and held my attention, **Local impact:** It was important that it happened here (in the community venues in Hull) and **Risk:** The artists were really challenging themselves with the work with pre-visit scores of 8 and 9 and post visit scores of 9 and 10 (a difference of 1).

When providing reasons for their score both prior to and after attending Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic, the peer assessors gave the following responses.

**Concept**

After attending Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic, the peer assessor rated the concept of the performance highly, mentioning the adaptation of a traditional storyline into something relevant and funny.

*“They took a traditional storyline and they made it relevant and funny.”*

**Presentation**

The peer assessor felt that Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic was well produced and presented, despite the fact it was held in a challenging and non-traditional performance venue.

*“That was a challenging space, it was an empty shop on a Saturday with a group of people.”*

**Distinctiveness**

After attending the performance, the peer assessor felt that Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic wasn’t very different to anything they’ve seen before as it contained somewhat predictable elements of children’s theatre.

*“There was a bit of a predictable children's theatre thing going on.”*

**Challenge**

The peer assessor felt that although the performance was fun, it couldn’t be described as thought-provoking, as it was a family show aimed at young children and they weren’t the intended audience.

*“It wasn't really thought-provoking because I'm not 6! I'm not the intended audience. But yes, in a fun way.”*

**Captivation**

The peer assessor praised the way the artists captured the attention of the children and parents in the audience due to the interactive nature of the show.

*“Well you never knew when you were getting a custard pie in your face, so you had to stay on top of it! The children loved it.”*

**Enthusiasm**

Because Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic was a show aimed at children, the peer assessor said that they would be unlikely to attend something similar in the future.

*“I'm not the intended audience for that show, so it's unlikely I would go out of my way to see something like that again, but then again they did a really good job.”*

**Local impact**

Both prior to and after attending Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic, the peer assessor felt it was important that the performance was happening in Hull’s community venue and expressed a wish for this to continue on a regular basis going forward.

*“I hope that things like that continue to happen there on a Saturday afternoon.”*

**Relevance**

The peer assessor didn’t feel as though Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic had anything to say about the world we live in, but stated that they didn’t feel that this was the purpose of the show.

**Originality**

Both prior to and after attending Jeddybears and Gary’s picnic, the peer assessor didn’t feel as though the show could be described as ground breaking.

**Risk**

The peer assessor felt that the artists were challenging themselves with Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic, as they were aware that this was not their usual activity and were performing out of their comfort zone.

*“If I've understood who the performers were, that isn't there core activity. So I think in that sense they were really challenging themselves.”*

**Excellence**

Both prior to and after attending the performance, the peer assessor rated Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic fairly highly on excellence, however couldn’t provide a reason for this.

**Rigour**

Although Jeddybears and Gary’s Picnic was rated fairly highly on rigour, the peer assessor described it as ‘a bit frayed around the edges’ at some points in the performance.

*“It felt a bit frayed at the edges at some times.”*

Table X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ACE Quality Metrics – Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic | Pre-Event(n=1) | Post-Event(n=1) | Change in score from Pre to Post Event |
| **Concept**: It was an interesting idea | **8.0** | **9.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Presentation:**It was well produced and presented | **9.0** | **9.0** | **0.0** |
| **Distinctiveness:**It was different from things I’ve experienced before | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Challenge:**It was thought-provoking | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Captivation:**It was absorbing and held my attention | **8.0** | **9.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Enthusiasm:**I would come to something like it again | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Local impact:**It was important that it happened here (in Hull community venues) | **9.0** | **10.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Relevance:**It had something to say about the world in which we live | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Originality:**It was ground-breaking | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Risk:**The artists were really challenging themselves with the work | **8.0** | **9.0** | **+1.0** |
| **Excellence:**It was be one of the best examples of its type | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **Rigour:** It was well thought through and put together | **8.0** | **8.0** | **0.0** |
| **TOTAL AVERAGE** | **8.2** | **8.5** | **+0.3** |

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic

* 1. Venue Feedback

Peer assessors were also asked to give feedback on the venues themselves, taking into account aspects such as accessibility; facilities; affordability (e.g. ticket prices and cost of transport); atmosphere and performance space.

**Accessibility**

Peer assessors gave positive feedback on the accessibility of the ‘Back to Ours’ venues, stating that they were clearly built to accommodate additional mobility needs. Several peer assessors mentioned that the volunteers on site were attentive, helping to direct visitors and ensuring all needs were met.

*“Both venues I attended were accessible and volunteer stewards were very efficient at ensuring people’s needs were met.”*

*“Accessibility was fine in terms of people being able to get in and out of spaces it was all very straightforward and clear and plenty of volunteers to direct you.”*

*“Very good there was a lift in both places, so you could have got into both venues if you had a physical disability, and space was created. There would have been enough staff if there had been anyone with physical disabilities. The volunteers were very attentive to those things very capable if any mobility issues equally as welcome as everyone else how you feel is this a place you are supposed to be in – feeling was I’ve come to a place ready and able to cope with all access abilities.”*

One peer assessor mentioned that they had trouble accessing the car park of their venue after they arrived on a bus. It is unclear what the size of vehicle was the issue or whether they couldn’t find the entrance, but this may be a point to consider for audience members arriving in large groups.

*“The parking wasn't great and it might be that we're not from the area, but we arrived on a bus and the bus had to park outside the school grounds and we couldn’t find a way to get into the school.”*

**Facilities**

The toilet facilities at the venues received positive feedback, with peer assessors commenting on the fact that they were clean and there were plenty available, with the volunteers ensuring everyone knew where they were.

*“Yes the volunteers made sure everyone knew where the toilets were and everyone felt very welcomed.*”

Peer assessors also mentioned the refreshments on offer, suggesting that there was a limited range, but this was adequate for the size of the event. One peer assessor was pleasantly surprised at being able to purchase wine at an evening show, however another was disappointed that there were no hot drinks available.

*“I knew that there was not going to be a 'bar' as such in a school setting, and so I have to admit I was pleasantly surprised to be served such a nice glass of very good wine at Skin – and a nice cup of tea and a cake at Pillow talk - so the facilities were excellent and very appropriate.”*

*“Toilets were great and clean and fine and lots of them. The refreshments seemed small but adequate for the festival*.”

**Affordability**

Peer assessors generally felt that the tickets were reasonably priced – particularly when compared to similar events.

*“The pricing of the tickets seemed very reasonable to me – I thought it was a very modest contribution – when I saw the prices I did think wow what a bargain.”*

*“Cheap compared to other offers - even in Hull which is cheap compared to other places.”*

Some mentioned however that what might seem like a low cost could soon add up when buying tickets for the whole family. One peer assessor suggested a scheme whereby local residents received a discount to help with the cost, or the opportunity to purchase a family ticket.

*“If you’re a family in the community and you’re buying tickets for 2 adults and 2 children it becomes unaffordable.”*

*“Although £5 isn't too expensive, if you're a parent with 3 kids, it does become expensive. I don't know if there's any family ticket options.”*

**Atmosphere**

Peer assessors felt that the venues were ‘inclusive’ and ‘comfortable’, speaking positively about the welcoming attitude of the volunteers and staff.

*“I always felt good and well taken care of always so many volunteers around checking you are ok and chatting to you.”*

*“The volunteers were very attentive to those things.”*

*“The volunteers and local people were so welcoming and warm and friendly and so helpful and that honestly made such a huge difference to me.”*

One peer assessor felt a sense of excitement in the space and got the impression that the audience were enjoying themselves. Another assessor said that the fact that children were engaging with the performance demonstrated that they were comfortable in the venue.

*“Definitely a sense of excitement, everyone was definitely enjoying the performance. It was a nice space to be in as well, it was warm enough, things like that, it didn't feel uncomfortable or anything.”*

*“I think the children felt really comfortable as well and I loved that they brought the children forward to sit in front of the stage, they were really happy to get involved which meant that they were comfortable.”*

A peer assessor that attended a performance within a classroom felt that the setting was distracting and could potentially put new theatregoers off. They went on to say that this was mitigated by the ability of the performer, however the show would have been more appropriate in a different space.

*“Until the performance was under way fully this felt distracting and uncomfortable and I think if I was new to Theatre attendance would have put me off. The performer and the story were strong so you did forget where you were after a while but I did leave feeling the show would be so much better shown in a studio theatre.”*

**Performance space**

Peer assessors gave positive feedback around the performance space overall, but felt the addition of tiered seating would improve the experience.

One peer assessor said that they struggled to see the stage when they were attending a show of a very visual nature, which had a negative effect on their experience. Another peer assessor decided to stand up throughout most of the performance so that they could better see the stage, but suggested that others who were not so confident in this setting may not have taken that initiative.

*“The space was very usable but could have been thought out a bit better - for example raised seats. I did struggle to see and when it's purely a show about spectacle that's tough.”*

*“I couldn't see the work that was going on on the stage when I was seated… If you were using the space again, either there needs to be a stage for the performers to elevate them, or there needs to be some kind of temporary raising of seats for the audience.”*

* 1. Creative Case for Diversity

Overall peer assessors felt that ‘Back to Ours’ as a whole explored diversity in a number of ways.

The variety of events in the programme itself was mentioned, with peer assessors suggesting that this made the festival accessible to a diverse audience. The concept of the festival was also seen as a way to encourage audience diversity.

*“The festival engaged those not normally included, those not keen to get involved, it was successful in making families with young children feel comfortable.”*

*“From what I know of the programme it's definitely accessible for a diverse audience.”*

*“It looks so far as though diversity has been taken into account and addressed through the programming and engagement strategies.”*

*“I think one of the things Back to Ours will do is to try its absolute best to include everyone, so everyone can come in at different angles.”*

Peer assessors also suggested that some of the performances themselves successfully tackled diversity in terms of their cast and content, exploring themes such as gender; sexuality; parenting; socio-economic status and race.

Feedback on how diversity was explored or represented in specific performances included:

* **Once Upon a Pillow Fight**

*“It was nice to see a range of performers from such different cultural backgrounds.”*

*“I think it was particularly nice to have a brother and sister of different races.”*

* **SKIN**

*“I feel like diversity was a theme in itself and it was clearly represented in the range of ethnicities and physical body types in the cast. And of course the theme of gender - and what it means to be male and female was really interesting. I think it was sensitively explored and visually beautiful.”*

*“The performers were representative of different cultural diversity, and the subject matter is really important.”*

* **Bedtime Stories**

*“‘Bedtime Stories’, had a mixed race cast and also tackled what it is to be a parent and the bond between parent and child which transcends all equality groups.”*

*“It was not directly addressing these issues but it did have a mixed race cast and it also addresses issues that all of us face so in that way it was fully inclusive.”*

* **Drip**

*“It explored gender, sexual orientation and at times socio-economic status and it did so in a subtle yet thought provoking way.”*

*“The whole sexuality theme was really interesting it was normalised and at the same time it really added to the feeling that you were living the experience with him.”*

* **Hotel Paradiso**

*“Hotel Paradiso dealt with all sorts of issues with humour and fun and great beauty.”*

*“It did very clearly but quite subtly in an appropriate style. The show was diverse in nature and there was diversity in the core of the story as well, but because of the way it was presented, everything was very smooth and comfortable.”*

* 1. Perceptions of Hull

Three peer assessors said they had no previous or existing connection to Hull. The others all had connections:

* One was born, grew up and previously worked in Hull and their family still live there;
* Two had worked in Hull or have professional connections there;
* One has visited Hull several times;
* One has a child that is studying in Hull.

Before visiting ‘Back to Ours’ peer assessors descriptions of Hull were varied, with several mentioning its industrial history, poor economic status and high levels of deprivation. Comments were made about the city’s reputation externally, with one assessor saying that Hull was overlooked and subject to unfair stereotypes.

*“Similar to Leicester really in that it was prosperous but badly affected by deindustrialisation and never really having the investment it needed to succeed.”*

*“I would describe Hull as a city that has not had the profile that it deserves given its size it is often overlooked in Yorkshire.”*

One peer assessor described Hull as ‘out on a limb’ and a place that people don’t tend to visit.

*“Generally you find that people haven't been there unless they've* *had a reason to go there because it's not somewhere that you travel through.”*

Several spoke about Hull undergoing a transition, noting that its UK City of Culture status was having a positive effect on the city and its people.

*“I think the City of Culture has been really fabulous, and what I've noticed is the way in which the people I have met in shops and round and about when I've been over for events, is that everybody seems switched onto culture, which for me, adds to the recommendation of Hull as a great place.”*

*“The City of Culture 2017 is having and will have a huge impact on Hull to change it for the better.”*

Seven of the eight peer assessors said that they would speak more positively about Hull due to their experience of ‘Back to Ours’. The other peer assessor said that they wouldn’t change the way they speak about Hull because it is their hometown and they already have strong links to the city.

This change in the perception of Hull was linked to wider experience of the city and not just the ‘Back to Ours’ performances attended. Some spoke of the warmth of the local people and the sense of positivity and excitement around the City of Culture title. Others were impressed about the regeneration across areas of Hull, with Humber Street and the Fruit Market specifically mentioned.

*“I definitely would speak more positively about Hull. Generally from visiting Hull and going to Humber Street and things like that - seeing those areas as well, there was definitely a sense of change, a sense of positivity, people being quite excited.”*

*“I went to genuinely good work in pretty challenging environments, what's not to like about that? Good quality work in unpromising settings that came over well, engaged the audiences and left a sense of 'I want more of this.'”*

*“I was impressed by the wealth of regeneration and the range of events that are happening in Hull. I was also equally impressed by the welcome I received from Hull 2017 staff, volunteers, and the staff at my hotel and the taxi drivers who took me to and from the shows I saw.”*

*“It feels like a city that isn't just focusing on one central location but is thinking more in terms of the broader recognition of challenge. I felt so very welcome.”*

*“I would speak more positively about Hull because of festival. We had never been before and it is not necessarily a city that we would go out of our way to choose to visit – we went to see the Turner prize, and we went to the Humber Street Gallery – and whenever I am going to new city the old town is the interesting bit for me – and Hull’s old town is just beautiful and so interesting and stunning architecture. So for me I’m happy to go somewhere that culturally has something interesting to offer - in general I am happy whether it is a beautiful city or not.”*

*“My experience of hull has changed absolutely – first of all I would tell and have been telling people that without being there in 2017 they have missed out on something special. With the city of culture, Hull has not only delivered – but they have delivered something fantastic.”*

* 1. Other observations / areas for improvement

Aside from the limited refreshment offer and the lack of tiered seating previously mentioned in this report, the show descriptions in the ‘Back to Ours’ brochure was mentioned as an area for improvement.

One peer assessor gave positive feedback around the ‘Back to Ours’ branding as a whole, however felt that the text within the brochure didn’t contain enough information about the festival and the performances. They felt that the language used could potentially be off-putting to people who aren’t regular consumers of culture and recommended that it is more factual and specific.

*“I love the Hull2017 website and I love the feel of the branding graphics – the graphics are really strong and in both of the school venues the branding was very strong and very visible. On the downside, the text on the brochure didn’t explain exactly what I was coming to. And I think it could have been more directed at the intended audience. I think it needed to be more factual and specific. I am persuaded that most people don’t like language like 'ground breaking' and 'innovative performance'. Personally I would have much preferred to understand that it is a team of some of Britain's top rated dancers.”*

* 1. Artworks Ranked by Quality Metrics

Prior to attending the shows, Skin and Drip had the highest average score, and level of expectation of all the shows subject to peer assessment. The Amazing Bubble Man had the lowest average score.

Table X: Ranked Shows Pre-visit

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Show Name** | **Average Score** |
| Once Upon a Pillow Fight | 8.0 |
| Skin | 9.3 |
| Drip | 8.5 |
| Bedtime Stories | 8.0 |
| The Amazing Bubble Man | 6.8 |
| Hotel Paradiso | 8.1 |
| Jeddybear’s & Gary’s Picnic | 8.2 |

After attending the shows, Drip and Jeddybear’s & Gary’s Picnic had dropped down the rankings. Hotel Paradiso had moved from midway up the rankings from the pre-visit scores to the highest scoring show.

Table X: Ranked Shows Post-visit

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Show Name** | **Average Score** |
| Once Upon a Pillow Fight | 8.8 |
| Skin | 9.3 |
| Drip | 8.3 |
| Bedtime Stories | 8.3 |
| The Amazing Bubble Man | 6.5 |
| Hotel Paradiso | 9.6 |
| Jeddybear’s & Gary’s Picnic | 8.5 |

* + 1. Artworks: Quality Metrics Compared

Figures X to X show each quality metric and the score per show post-visit. These show that:

* Hotel Paradiso, Bedtime Stories and Once Upon a Pillow Fight were the top scorers for **Concept.**
* Hotel Paradiso, Bedtime Stories and Skin were the top scorers for **Presentation.**
* Skin, Hotel Paradiso and Once Upon a Pillow Fight were the top scorers for **Distinctiveness.**
* Once Upon a Pillow Fight, Hotel Paradiso and Skin were the top scorers for **Challenge.**
* Bedtime Stories and Hotel Paradiso were the top scorers for **Captivation.**
* Once Upon a Pillow Fight, Hotel Paradiso and Bedtime Stories were the top scorers for **Enthusiasm.**
* Once Upon a Pillow Fight, Skin, Bedtime Stories, The Amazing Bubble Man, Hotel Paradiso and Jeddybear’s & Gary’s Picnic were the top scorers for **Local impact.**
* Skin, Once Upon a Pillow Fight and Bedtime Stories were the top scorers for **Relevance.**
* Hotel Paradiso, Skin and Jeddybear’s & Gary’s Picnic were the top scorers for **Originality.**
* Skin, Hotel Paradiso and Drip were the top scorers for **Risk.**
* Hotel Paradiso, Skin and Bedtime Stories were the top scorers for **Excellence.**
* Once Upon a Pillow Fight and Hotel Paradiso were the top scorers for **Rigour.**

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Concept

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Presentation

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Distinctiveness

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Challenge

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Captivation

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Enthusiasm

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Local Impact

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Relevance

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Originality

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Risk

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Excellence

Figure X: Arts Council England Quality Metrics – Rigour

* + 1. Creative Case for Diversity

Pre-event, some of the peer assessors were unable to make a judgement on how they felt that diversity might be explored or represented by the different shows within the Back to Ours. Those shows mentioned as being potentially diverse were:

* The Rocky Horror Show
* Skin
* Hotel Paradiso

In regard to the programme as a whole, it was considered that there would be diversity in the audiences in relation to audiences who would normally engage with such shows i.e. white working class, low income etc. As such, it was inherently open to welcoming as broad and diverse a range of people as wanted to interact.

*‘It has the most potential to literally represent diversity, in that everyone can participate and everyone who can speak into a microphone can be involved in the creation of the work.’*(Peer Assessor)

The circle style performance being explored by Hotel Paradiso was referenced in terms of circus traditionally covering a wide range in terms of engagement.

*‘Traditionally circuses do cover a wide range in terms of engagement but also in their performance. So I would imagine certainly from a cultural point of view they generally do cover all cultures. And they're gender neutral if you like too so they do engage with and support as well things like that, they are quite open’.*(Peer Assessor)

Several of the Peer Assessors referred to their expectations of diversity in terms of social background and gender.

*‘Diversity for me includes social background so that is a big thing for this festival. I would expect to see the white working class reflected as well as challenged in these performances. In this instance, I feel like gender is really important and so it is so nice to see important gender fluid work like the Rocky Horror Show and Skin and a lot of people would subconsciously equate Skin and the Rocky horror show so it is really nice to see it is a really nice addition’*(Peer Assessor)

A Peer Assessor spoke about the importance of being able to connect with the audience in terms of both the subject matter and the content of the shows.

*‘It is very important that the audience is able to connect with and make an emotional connection to the performers in places which are very monoculture white British we need to think about bringing them a window into modern British society and getting them comfortable with how culture has changed in Britain today.’*(Peer Assessor)

Speaking about Drip and SKIN, one of the Peer Assessors voiced their opinion inclusion/exclusion and unifying people.

*‘The major thing with diversity is that the audience want to… feel part of the performance. For me social exclusion is part of diversity. This is the group of people who are excluded and they feel excluded and the whole point of this festival is to unify them and include them. The audience needs to feel like this festival is for them – they need to recognise and see themselves in the central concepts – it needs to be about the inclusion of people.’*(Peer Assessor)

Following attendance at the Back to Ours shows these preconceptions were played out.

* **Hotel Paradiso**

*‘Hotel Paradiso dealt with all sorts of issues with humour and fun and great beauty. And I think that's a really good way to approach both a diverse audience and diverse content.’*
(Peer Assessor)

* **Jeddybear’s and Gary’s Picnic**

*‘I think Jeddybears did a reasonable job [of dealing with issues] - not as good [as Hotel Paradiso].’*
(Peer Assessor)

* **The Amazing Bubble Man**

*‘Only in accessibility - I can't judge the diversity of the audience but the show didn't tackle any issues around diversity directly.’*(Peer Assessor)

* **Once Upon A Pillow Fight**

*‘In terms of the casting there was a good mix of different cultures and ethnicities represented and I think it was particularly nice to have a brother and sister of different races. I think overall the festival was successful in relating to the cultural make up of Hull.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘In terms of diversity I would have to go for a score of 10 it is an easy win to have an ethnically diverse cast - so to have a boy and girl playing brother and sister and being of different ethnicities - I thought that was really nice to see - and exactly the right thing to happen in our society… I liked that aspect.’*(Peer Assessor)

* **Drip**

*‘Drip addressed gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic status but did so in a really engaging and accessible way.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I really enjoyed Drip. It really felt like an event that people were part of – that they could get behind this character – this is someone without any sexuality and the message is that shouldn’t be an issue. It was endearing if near the knuckle. I thought it was a really interesting beginning… and it honestly took me quite some time before I realised that this bumbling teen – this was the performance! Brilliant!’*(Peer Assessor)

‘In terms of issues - drip was about sexuality, some diversity in there – audience not young LGBT audience – in a way the fact we had older audience was interesting because it was an expression of a very different lifestyle –and so that could have had the potential to impact on diversity issues… but I wonder how many older people felt like they shouldn’t really be there*’*(Peer Assessor)

* **Bedtime Stories**

*‘Bedtime Stories had a mixed race cast and also tackled what it is to be a parent and the bond between parent and child which transcends all equality groups.’*(Peer Assessor)

* 1. Perceptions of Hull

Three peer assessors stated that they had no previous or existing personal connection to Hull. The others all had connections:

* One was born in Hull and grew up in Hull;
* One had previously worked in Hull; and
* Three had friends who live in Hull.

Before attending Back to Ours, the peer assessors’ descriptions of Hull varied in depth and tone. Mention was made of people only having visited the city previously if they had a particular reason to and its reputation externally in terms of the breakdown of various industries. They spoke however; of how it was undergoing great change and that there is a great deal to recommend to others about the city. Others spoke of the expected impact of the City of Culture status, regeneration that has already begun, its geographical location and friendly people. In the main messages were positive.

*‘I think lots of people describe Hull as out on a limb… generally you find that people haven't been there unless they've had a reason to go there because it's not somewhere that you travel through.* *If I was describing it to somebody at this minute in time I would talk about the City of Culture and the journey it's been on…’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘My hometown and I'm extremely proud of it.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I love Hull actually. I would recommend it to people, with or without the City of Culture… what I've noticed is the way in which the people I have met in shops and round and about when I've been over for events, is that everybody seems switched onto culture, which for me, adds to the recommendation of Hull as a great place’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I would describe Hull as a city that has not had the profile that it deserves given its size it is often overlooked in Yorkshire as a city… the city has suffered from unfair stereotypes… a city that is slowly reinventing itself it has a lot to offer even though it has been through some very challenging times and has suffered from the death of its industry. It is making the transition towards becoming a destination city that people want to visit to come and see the culture and art’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘Imagine a regional city which was really grand and prosperous until the fishing industry declined and fortunes changed, it is a city that has experienced deprivation and regeneration and there are very mixed areas the City of Culture 2017 is having and will have a huge impact on Hull to change it for the better.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘It was prosperous but badly affected by deindustrialization and never really having the investment it needed to succeed.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I think things like the [Humber Bridge] are fabulous. I think it’s a working city, it's one of the big docks, and I think its functional. We went to Rotterdam from Hull earlier in the year, so it's sort of there's a purpose to it.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘A great place that people miss out on.’*(Peer Assessor)

Seven of the eight peer assessors said their experience of attending Back to Ours show(s) would encourage them to speak more positively about Hull to someone else. This linked to their wider experience of the city, not just the Back to Ours shows they attended. Many had visited museums, galleries and other spaces across the city including the centre; and many remarked on the change in atmosphere and the friendliness of the people.

*‘There was definitely a sense of change, a sense of positivity, people being quite excited. I was speaking to some of the volunteers of City of Culture and they were talking about how technology is increasing employment in the area and bringing professionals into the area, obviously there's building work going on in the area so young professionals may move into that area, it's become quite trendy I suppose. So I think art has brought that into the area generally and obviously Back to Ours is a festival that's part of that.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I went to genuinely good work in pretty challenging environments, what's not to like about that? Good quality work in unpromising settings that came over well, engaged the audiences and left a sense of 'I want more of this.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I was impressed by the wealth of regeneration and the range of events that are happening in Hull. I was also equally impressed by the welcome I received from Hull 2017 staff, volunteers, and the staff at my hotel and the taxi drivers who took me to and from the shows I saw. It is great that East Yorkshire is starting to get some profile. I had an excellent experience.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘It feels like a city that isn't just focusing on one central location but is thinking more in terms of the broader recognition of challenge. I felt so very welcome.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I would speak more positively about Hull because of festival. We had never been before and it is not necessarily a city that we would go out of our way to choose to visit – we went to see the Turner prize, and we went to the Humber Street Gallery – and whenever I am going to new city the old town is the interesting bit for me – and Hull’s old town is just beautiful and so interesting and stunning architecture. So for me I’m happy to go somewhere that culturally has something interesting to offer - in general I am happy whether it is a beautiful city or not. I have to say a big negative for Hull is that awful huge dual carriage way running right through middle of it – could do without that – difficult to navigate and very ugly and not good.’*(Peer Assessor)

The remaining peer assessor stated that they would not change the way they would describe Hull to someone else, though they were already very positive about their home city.

*‘I'm from Hull and already had strong links, so this experience wouldn't affect that.’*(Peer Assessor)

* 1. Other Observations
		1. Strengths of Back to Ours

The people of Hull, Hull 2017 Volunteers and staff in various capacities around the city were all mentioned as strengths by a peer assessor, in terms of the welcome they received across the city.

*‘I was also equally impressed by the welcome I received from Hull 2017 staff, volunteers, and the staff at my hotel and the taxi drivers who took me to and from the shows I saw.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘The taxi drivers I had were obviously so keen on it and they knew so much about it – no scoffing and mocking. My taxi driver was from Algeria I think – and he especially drove me past your state of the art recycling centre – and he said “Hull got this because of hull city of culture” – and I thought that perception was really interesting.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘The presence of volunteers was really welcome and clear and they were so friendly and knowledgeable.’*(Peer Assessor)

In addition to this, the way that ‘Back to Ours’ fed into the broader Hull 2017 programme was praised, as it felt integrated into the whole rather than something that felt disconnected.

*‘It feels like a city that isn't just focusing on one central location but is thinking more in terms of the broader recognition of challenge.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘I would speak more positively about Hull because of [the] festival.’*(Peer Assessor)

*‘We’ve seen lots of things all around the world and Hull2017 is up there with some of the best things we’ve ever seen.’*(Peer Assessor)

* + 1. Areas for Improvement

Some aspects that were identified as detracting from the experience, or in need of improvement were:

* **Refreshments and seating**

*‘Obviously there was a couple of things that could have been tweaked in terms of refreshments and seating, but it was overall nothing too much to complain about.’*(Peer Assessor)

* **Challenging language used in the brochure**

*‘On the downside the text on the brochure didn’t explain exactly what I was coming to. And I think it could have been more directed at the intended audience. I think it needed to be more factual and specific. I am persuaded that most people don’t like language like 'ground breaking' and 'innovative performance'. Personally, I would have much preferred to understand that it is a team of some of Britain's top rated dancers.’*(Peer Assessor)

* **Difficulty in navigating the City Centre**

*‘I have to say a big negative for Hull is that awful huge dual carriage way running right through middle of it – could do without that – difficult to navigate and very ugly and not good.’*(Peer Assessor)