

Ordinary Days Feedback

Below is the feedback submitted about 'Ordinary Days' Showstoppers 2016 Edinburgh Fringe show. The feedback is primarily in quotes lifted directly from the form. Some quotes have been shortened to include the most pertinent points and some have been corrected for grammar and spelling. Suggestions for future prod teams/trips to Edinburgh are highlighted at the bottom of each section. Some of the feedback has been summarised to elucidate the constructive points or removed if it was deemed unconstructive.

Direction

Overall the direction was applauded in all the feedback. With quotes such as:

"Emily, Rob and Kim all had helpful and insightful contributions."

"All 4 cast members seemed to know and understand their characters and motivations, so I think the direction was good!"

"Emily and Rob were both fab and had great ideas for things. Emily in particular was very in tune to getting characters out of people, and has a great eye for making blocking look natural and unforced. Snaps for everyone!"

"The direction was, for the most part, clear. The character work was really interesting and helpful. The notes were always relevant. I want to thank them for spending valuable individual time with the actors."

What could be improved?

It was expressed in all the feedback submitted that communication needed to be addressed between directors and the musical director and that perhaps 3 directors was a crowd for such a small show.

"This show was a song cycle and having 3 directors was unnecessary and this imbalance created some tension within the prod team. More communication with Gem to reduce tension about who got a say about different aspects of the show was probably needed. Making sure everyone is on the same page and have the same cohesive idea is important."

"Sometimes the ideas between Rob and Emily were not cohesive, leading to arguments in rehearsals. Also, sometimes the direction didn't always take the singing into account, and this led to arguments in rehearsals, which again is perfectly understandable for directors who hadn't fully directed a musical before, as it is totally different to a play. Generally communication in all areas needed work - as is the problem on every production team ever - and we did fix this during the rehearsal process in Southampton!"

"The division of roles and communication on who was meant to do what had an adverse effect on both sides (direction and musical direction), as well as on the cast as it spilled over into rehearsals. In future, directors and MDs of sung-through shows need to communicate constantly, and should probably attend and lead rehearsals together."

It was also mentioned that some cast members would have appreciated more critical feedback from the directors.

“They should not be scared of criticising things more often. I believe that useful feedback is always a better help than sweet lies.”

For Future Prod Teams:

Ensure that there is good communication between creative team members to resolve any creative differences.

Musical Direction

The musical direction was praised thoroughly in everyone’s feedback. With quotes such as:

“I really enjoyed teaching the show and being able to spend real time on singing technique and vocal acting.”

“Gem is literally a "gem". Her patience and kindness are limitless. More than being a good MD Gem is a good singing teacher. She can make people sing, improve their range, give them confidence (even if she lacks some herself).”

“From the cast's improvement over the short process, Gem's talent and ability as a Musical Director is indisputable. The solo piano score was a great choice for Edinburgh. Gold stars all around.”

What could be improved?

Again, communication was the big issue raised in all the feedback that was submitted. Those prod team members that submitted feedback were aware of the communication issues and openly raised them. A lack of communication led to disputes and confusion in rehearsals as has been previously mentioned. It was also raised that communication problems resulted in disputes about Andy’s role as a 2nd pianist for rehearsals and up in Edinburgh which led to a lot of preventable stress and worry for all involved.

One person summarised with: “In future, production teams need to communicate, be clear and honest with each other about what their roles are and what they will do in the process-rather than make vague promises then go back on them-and just generally treat each other with mutual respect and professionalism.”

Other quotes relating to the musical direction are:

“More communication with the directors during rehearsals to make sure everyone was on the same page, obviously with a show like this there was a lot of overlap with vocal acting and acting through song and who was responsible for each needed to be addressed properly to avoid confusion and upset.”

“I'm aware communication between the directors and myself wasn't great at the start - because Ordinary Days is a sung-through show, it meant that a lot of the roles crossed over and there was a lot of confusion over who was going to do what. We did sort this out in the end, but in retrospect it would have been a good idea to meet with the director before teaching each song.”

“I think it is a real shame that Andy did not get to play more often.”

For future production teams: Ensure that roles are defined in advance and that this is something that is stuck to throughout the process.

Ensure that communication occurs across the prod team.

Production

The production was generally praised with quotes such as:

“Ben did a fab job in taking the lead while we were up there.”

“Ben and Andy B were very good in their respective roles, especially when we got to Edinburgh. Andy B was fab backstage and while he will say he didn't do much, he was a fantastic source of calm for the cast during the show runs.”

“Promotion of the show went well, the flyering schedule Ben made for this year worked incredibly well. Working with the other Gone Rogue shows was incredibly successful, as we boosted each other's shows audiences and popularity, especially as the shows were all well done!” “

“Catherine and Andy S handled the marketing and official Edinburgh stuff and reviews very well, with that side of things all running very smoothly.”

What could be improved?

It was suggested in most of the feedback that communication was again the primary issue with the Production side of things which lead to jobs not being completed, producers feeling at a loose end and further disputes. It was also expressed that there needed to be a lead producer present and readily available throughout the process or alternatively that tasks needed to be delegated and the whole team used appropriately whilst up in Edinburgh.

“You need a lead producer who is present in Edinburgh and available in the run up as this is a very crucial time.”

“Again, communication - the directors and the producers often did not see eye to eye on problems and they were solved via Facebook posts”

“Cast clothing should have been done before going up to Edinburgh.”

“I think that having a producer for an Edinburgh show who is working as C Venues (or another venue) during the show doesn't work, as the last 2 years this had been a problem for us in various ways.”

“Again; communication. Being brought on as an AP after auditions, I was never actually given an actual task or role to fulfil, The production team never made an effort to include me or tell me about anything that was happening; I would always find out things once they had been decided and resolved, from cast members. It felt like I was a subsidiary of the cast. In future, if production teams NEED to communicate, include the whole production team in matters that involve the production team, and only bring people on to the team if they are going to serve a purpose, rather than for the sake of it.”

For Future Production Teams: Ensure that all the production jobs are completed to schedule.

Endeavour to have a lead producer who is able to go up to Edinburgh and who is not too committed to other work whilst there.

Ensure that production roles are fairly distributed between producers – including APs and that everyone has a clearly defined role both during rehearsals and in Edinburgh.

Rehearsal Process

The rehearsal process was generally enjoyable however there was some tension. The quotes below summarise well:

“I feel like we didn't really utilise our time, some days I was only called for 2 hours and it seemed a bit silly cos I was only in Southampton to rehearse. We probably could have done the show in 2 weeks if we had had full days of rehearsals.”

“I enjoyed working in such a small group of people, but it became very tense in places, due to various things including a lack of communication between the direction team and myself (which was later rectified!), but also because it is inevitable when spending such a long time with so few people that there will be arguments between individual members of production team and cast.”

“The Prod Team has done such an incredible job at putting together such a hard show in so little time. Being a very small team (cast and prod), the atmosphere during rehearsal was very different from any other show. You sure get to know more about people which is great but also rather tiring when you are in the middle of a small crisis.”

“This year outside of rehearsals themselves there was no attempt at cast and crew social time, or bonding. In future, there needs to be more effort and coordination from the heads of the production team to both make rehearsals more enjoyable and arrange more socials/fun things outside of rehearsals, especially with a small cast.”

For Future Prod Teams:

Do plenty of socials and fun things outside of rehearsals to ensure cast bonding

Consider the length of the rehearsal process and perhaps ask your cast whether they would prefer to be called for more hours over a shorter period.

General Edinburgh Comments

Overall my impression from the feedback was that Edinburgh was for the most part very enjoyable.

“I believe the idea of going up as a Gone Rogue unit, rather than just Showstoppers or TG, worked very well.”

“Overall I'd say the shows and Gone Rogue experience was a great improvement on last year.”

There was disagreement over the choice of housing this year with one person saying:

“Cat did a great job with the house, and mostly the house was a great deal of fun.”

Whilst others found it too cramped with one person saying:

“17 in a flat was too many, especially as there was more than that for the most part due to people staying. It wasn't crowded but you never got a moment alone.”

With regards to Edinburgh feedback a couple of points were raised:

“Need a show liaison who can be present during rehearsals and up at the fringe”

“When we do Edinburgh feedback in the future, it might be worth changing some of these questions so they are more relevant.”

For Future Committees: Ensure that a show liaison is elected and that this person is someone who can be present throughout the rehearsal process and in Edinburgh.

Devise a separate feedback form for Edinburgh shows that has questions related to accommodation and being in Edinburgh and removes less relevant questions such as tech.

Try to maintain the good Gone Rogue relationships for next year and encourage working together as a unit.