

8 Responses. 1 Cast, 4 Prod Team, 3 Audience.

- **Direction:**

- There was a mix of positives and negatives about the direction in the show with Ollie described by a cast member as “Fantastic”. Some members of the audience saw some blocking as “a little messy” in group numbers and sometimes unpolished or out of time. This was matched however for praise for the minimal style and the way all sides were conveyed. Moments in individuals’ solos were described as “incredible”. In contrast, an audience member thought that the blocking was a little “lacklustre”. This said, the characters were highly praised with people across the board saying how the characters were clear and the cast member praised Ollie’s characterisation and how much thought he had obviously put into each story in both mental and physical. In addition, they were grateful for how he allowed them to bring in their own ideas for the characters. It was noted however, by the cast member, that they would have preferred to have seen Will more both at rehearsals and during the actual fringe run itself. This gave the impression that Ollie was the only director involved in the process. Conversely, a member of the prod team stated that Ollie and Will’s vision and communication was clear and Will often provided insight that added a great deal to the show.

Due to the nature of one of the responses, I’d like to recite a large section from their response.

“The blocking was a little lacklustre with chairs thrown in for interest on stage but not always used. Most of the things that caught my attention visually within the show looked like they came from within the characters, for this version of the show I’d say for 75% of the time you could have shut your eyes and just listened and not missed anything of any interest. There were also some throw-away moments which were almost painful to watch, like they were trying to tick a box to say yes we covered that e.g. I’d give it all for you, there are about 4 minutes of a song that the ‘twist’ ending could have been building to, but with it happening in the last few seconds, the moment felt a little cheap.”

To sum up, “The limits of the show slow were clear but what was achieved in the time allotted was impressive.”

- **Musical Direction**

- Once again, there was a mix of responses regarding the musical direction of the show. Gem was described as “Amazing” “Fantastic” and “Knows her Stuff”. There was praise for the blending exercises that was done with the cast with one member of the audience commenting how enjoyable it was when the harmonies came together just right. However they then followed this by stating this appeared to be “few and far between”. One prod team member commented that Gem helped the cast “use their ranges to the best of their abilities” and the cast did a “fab job, given the difficulty of the score”. One audience member commented that the notes had been changed for one cast member but also suggested that perhaps they should have been changed for other cast members as well. To sum up: “Gem is an absolute dream.”

To paraphrase the cast member response: “Time management was an issue that arose and followed through into the run itself. This was a mixture of cast and prod team fault however could have been managed more effectively by the Prod team. It was problems with time management from the rehearsal process that then manifested its way into the Fringe run and thus caused a deterioration of morale at

the beginning of the run. Another thing was that the harmonies, despite being requested during the rehearsal period were only uploaded here days before the start of the Fringe run, even though they were prepared earlier. It did not give the cast time to solidify harmonies before their time at the Fringe”

This point was reflected in some responses criticising the quality of the harmonies and voices.

“This was also unfair because it relied on the casts ability to sight read music perfectly during the time away and as the cast were not all at the same standard with this, it became an added stress that could have easily been avoided.”

Other points were raised regarding the band. Suggesting that the pianist was “unable to carry the show” and questioning if “the drummer was even playing” due to them not being heard. Contrastingly, a member of prod team said “The Harmonies were so well drilled and the cast seemed so comfortable in what they were singing.”

- **Production**

- A mix of responses. Chloe was praised as “amazing” with the programmes and props. The effectiveness of the costumes and props were also praised saying how useful they were in separating out the characters without seeming over the top. There was also praise from the prodteam about how effort was made to keep costs down and provide good opportunities for the cast such as performing on the mile. The publicity was described as simple and effective, which was praised by the audience due to the context of the fringe. Chloe’s technical experience was called “invaluable” and Patrick did a lot to help the production take shape. A prod team member commented that Gaby “dedicated herself beyond her supervising role and helping out in a multitude of ways” with the cast member saying that her “contacts with the fringe mile performances were fantastic but were unable to be used due to time slot of the performance.”

To improve: There was a lack of flyering and this was commented on by individuals in all three categories. The cast member felt that “The production wasn’t up to standard”. They also said that the “producers were not there for nearly as much of the rehearsal process as they should have been” this culminated in saying that “The first time all props and costumes were used was in Edinburgh, which again provided unnecessary stress for the cast.” The cast were also asked to source their own props days before the beginning of the run. A common comment was the lack of fundraising done for the show. This can be compared with the suggestion from a prod team member that communication between the producers was not up to scratch. A few audience members also commented that having “black clothing with black chairs against a black curtain meant the cast members were a little lost”.

- **Tech**

- The low, minimal level of tech was highly praised. What was done was described as “good”. Suggestions from responses on how it could be improved were different colours of lights or simple a rolled-up backdrop to prevent it seeming bland. One prod member did comment however that this “wasn’t part of the vision”. The cast member pointed out that the tech crew were not arriving on time for the get in so there wasn’t time for sound checks before each run.

- **Anything Else**

Cast member response: “Knowing the issues that faced this Edinburgh production and the measures that Committee went through in order to regulate it, it was very disappointing the lack of support that’s Committee gave the show. This was something that was discussed in

show liaison feedback during the rehearsal period as a point from both the cast and the prod team that we were assured would be rectified. It was very disappointing that no members of the committee came to the open dress rehearsals, this really set the president for the lack of support that the show had. I understand that it is not always financially viable to go up to Edinburgh, so seeing no members of committee there is understandable. But the lack of committee presence at the open dress rehearsals is not as forgiving. Regardless of physical presence a Facebook message or text wishing the cast and prod team well would have been greatly appreciated. However the lack of committee support, after we specifically asked for some, really suggested that the committee had no support in the show and that we as a show had become a liability. This mentality grateful affected the show and unfortunately could have been prevented.”

Prod team member: “Patrick did a great job as Tours officer.

For future shows I really think a better relationship needs to be established from the start between the committee and the prod team, particularly by there being less rumours spread by members of the committee, as the negative atmosphere created at the start of the process made things more difficult throughout despite improvements. Also, a lot of the time throughout the process communication from committee to us came across as critical, rather than supportive.

Better communication with the committee would also have led to better fundraising, as when support was offered (for example by running the fundraisers at the Olympics - which was really appreciated!), members of the production team were given no notice and so were unable to attend and support the committee’s efforts.

Overall, if I’m being completely honest, the negative atmosphere has led to me being reluctant to get involved in shows next year, as at the end of the day we’re meant to enjoy being a part of shows as this is a hobby, and the atmosphere created made the process too stressful to be enjoyable.

(Also, I want to really praise the efforts made by Tiggy in particular to turn things around - I do really understand that there were a lot of challenges to overcome that were particularly difficult, but things were just handled in the wrong way - a message asking how we are, not just how the finances are, would have made us feel much more supported, instead of pressured)

Finally, there was a lot of confusion as to who the liaisons were - the prod liaison never introduced themselves, so this is something that could be made much clearer in the future.”