

‘In the Dark’ Summary Report

Larbert High and The Hippodrome

April 2020

Overview

Into Film and Film Hub Scotland worked with 5 young people aged 15-19 from Larbert High School on the ‘In the Dark’ consultation project. The project involved the group of 5 pupils researching a screening at their local FAN venue (The Hippodrome), watching the chosen film and then feeding back their thoughts and opinions of the experience. The purpose of this project was to gain a better understanding of what is appealing to youth audiences in independent cinema venues.

Task

The group split into two and the first group attended a screening of *Little Women* on Friday 24th January 2020 and the second group also watched *Little Women* on Sunday 26th January 2020. The group then met Georgia (Film Hub Scotland) & Katie (Into Film) on Monday 24th February to complete a short SurveyMonkey and feedback on their thoughts on the experience.

Reflections

- Only one pupil had attended a film at Hippodrome in the past 12 months
- Pupils found transport to the cinema was challenging due to a lack of buses on a Sunday and no direct train link. Pupils had to ask their parents to drive them to the cinema and reflected that due to the transport issues, many young people would struggle to get to the cinema.
- Pupils felt very welcome at the cinema and liked the community spirit and atmosphere
- From the sign outside to the seating style inside, the group felt like they were attending the theatre rather than a cinema and appreciated the ‘authenticity’ of the experience. They noted that the screening room was very different to Cineworld where ‘all the rooms look the same’
- Reflection that the adverts shown were for films that had been out in cinemas for a while, such as *Cats*
- Slight issue with regards to the food they had ordered, the venue staff weren’t aware of it which caused a mix up. However, there was an overall consensus that the popcorn was the best they’d ever tasted!

Recommendations

- Improved signage around the venue for the toilets and stairs
- Increased promotion around being the oldest cinema in Scotland
- Advertise more online and perhaps set up an Instagram account
- Adapt tickets to look more old-fashioned to go with the aesthetic ‘they should be proud of their aesthetic’
- Make it clearer from the outside that it’s a cinema by having movie posters

Impact

Quotes from the project participants:

'It has re-shaped my view of how cinema 'should' look/feel because I am used to Cineworld or The Vue'

'I feel more confident about criticising and giving feedback on an event without feeling out my depth'

'The project gave me time to hang out with my friend and made me feel part of the community'

On the SurveyMonkey forms:

- 4/5 of the young people said they were more likely to visit the cinema as a paying customer
- 5/5 of the young people said they were more aware of the opportunities available at this cinema

Quote from the teacher who supported the project:

'In the Dark was a unique opportunity for pupils to affect real change in their local area. Our participants loved being able to have their voices and ideas on the table when it came to improvements for their local cinema. They have been able to evaluate their own experiences with cinema and community in a way that is meaningful and has real impact, which is an opportunity not always afforded to them. I would strongly encourage people to participate in this project.'

Kerry Abercrombie, English & Media Teacher, Larbert High School

Conclusion

Overall the 'In the Dark' project in Falkirk was a success and pupils impressively identified and understood the positives of an independent cinema whilst also providing constructive feedback on how the experience could be improved for attendees. All the young people who took part in the project were incredibly grateful for the experience.