

To read or not to read reviews, that is the question.

Acknowledgement: this document has been created with the help and advice of Thom Dibdin who reviews performances created and staged in Edinburgh.

- Remember that a reviewer is writing for their readers rather than the company – this is where it differs in some ways to a festival adjudication where there is a stronger element on providing a critique for the club to feed into future productions (although this can also be true of reviews)
- Don't be afraid of not reading reviews – it is your choice and there are professional companies and actors who have a policy never to read a review
- If you do want to read reviews perhaps the director could take it on and communicate with the cast?
- Try to understand what the reviewer is trying to get at before you agree or disagree with it
- If they think that the reviewer hasn't understood something ask 'why?' If a reviewer hasn't understood with the advance information they were sent could it be that other members of the audience won't either
- Understand the constraints of the review in terms of time to get it out and limits on space for reviews (this may differ from print to online blogs)

Although publications may have their own star rating system here is a blog by Thom Dibdin about the criteria he uses and his opinion about how helpful, or not, it can be.

<http://www.alledinburghtheatre.com/about-2/the-star-system/>