

# ThreeWeeks IN EDINBURGH

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## CHILDREN'S SHOWS

### Belt Up's 'Octavia'

Belt Up Theatre

Belt Up's foray into children's theatre has paid off; this interactive fairytale is aesthetically and physically magical. In a corner complete with grass, deck chairs and washing lines full of weird and wonderful things, the intelligent and bitter-sweet tale of Octavia's mystical journey unravels. Visually, the attention to detail is admirable and there is some inventive and intricate choreography, including a skilful sequence from the top of a piano and clever shadow puppetry. The actors are mesmerising as clowns and are musically talented, so that although the bits involving audience interaction might have been a little better crafted, this is still a multi-sensory treat and the performance flies by. Ideal for families, and an enchanting way to start the afternoon.

C soco, 4 - 30 Aug (not 25), 12.00pm (12.55pm), £5.50 - £9.50, fpp 9. [gjs]

tw rating 4/5

### The Emperor's Quest

Milk Teeth Productions

You may have already seen Milk Teeth Productions without realising it. They're the ones letting children do some painting in C's bar before their morning show (turn up early if you fancy joining in). On stage, musicians provide the soundtrack for this re-telling of a Chinese fairy tale about an Emperor on a quest to appoint an heir, and their exotically flavoured music will stretch young minds more than the performances, which are strongest in the songs (volume in dialogue is low, so sit near the front), but the kids love it when characters speak directly to them. Aimed at the younger age bracket (between four and ten years old, roughly), this show is enjoyable, but doesn't quite live up to its promise.

C, 4 - 30 Aug, 11.15am (12.05pm), £4.50 - £8.50, fpp 11. [rtw]

tw rating 3/5

## COMEDY

### Nathan Caton - Breakfast at Stephanie's

Phil McIntyre Entertainments by Arrangement With Michele Milburn at International Artists

Caton's routine is about his Grandma's disapproval of his choice to pursue a career in comedy, and it was hard not to spot the irony in the show's failure to elicit more than a handful of laughs. That's not to say it's all bad; Caton is a charming and personable storyteller, but his timing is unpredictable. Too often he failed to nail his punchlines, or spoilt his audience rapport with unexpected crudity, which was at odds with the rest of his material. Indeed, his failure to settle on a tone was perhaps the show's biggest failing. Hopefully he will tighten up over the course of the run, but for now I have to agree with Granny.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 9.30pm (10.30pm), £9.00 - £12.50, fpp 101. [al]

tw rating 2/5

### Jojo Sutherland Goes For The Jocular

Jojo Sutherland/The Stand Comedy Club

They say that life begins at forty; Jojo Sutherland says that all hope fades at forty. This is, essentially, the premise of this hilarious, gag-filled rant from our seemingly inebriated host. Jojo relates the pet hates that have developed as a result of being near-bankrupt, middle-aged and married with four children, and delivers her tales with such acerbic wit that the whole audience (myself included), found themselves laughing and wincing in equal measure on several occasions. It's a shame that Jojo's delivery is a bit inconsistent - proceedings lag a bit for the briefest of moments here and there - but she more than makes up for this with her unashamedly vulgar anecdotes that could mix seamlessly with the best bits of 'Grumpy Old Women'. Liable to offend, but good fun if you can stomach it.

The Stand Comedy Club III & IV, 6 - 29 Aug (not 16), 12.55pm (1.55pm), £6.00 - £7.00, fpp 80. [dc]

tw rating 3/5

### Daddy Ate All My Easter Eggs And Never Replaced Them

The Incurably Resentful Theatre Company

Disney does 'Jack The Ripper' forms the theme for the opening parody from this sketch show troupe comprising three guys and one considerably more talented female), and the show begins with the performers riffing on old classic songs from the Jungle Book to Aladdin in a deliciously macabre manner. Their opening gambit is both astonishing and amusing, but sadly the show begins to misfire soon after. Their cliché characters - such as gay 'Uncle Bender' - and the outrageously passé Scottish stereotyping result in their attempts at risqué becoming borderline offensive. The performance is saved by a musical finale that is genuinely well crafted and humorous, leaving one to wonder just how much more accomplished the show could have been entirely as a musical.

C soco, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 6.55pm (7.35), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp 51. [to]

tw rating 3/5

### Lights! Camera! Improvise!

The Scat Pack in Association With Hiatus Theatre

A hilarious improv show for the movie-going era: every night the Scat Pack create a new improvised movie based on audience suggestions, and the cinematic device makes the show a coherent whole, rather than the traditional series of disconnected sketches.

The performers have fun playing with the comic possibilities of pausing, rewinding and fast-forwarding the action; ballet in reverse proves a particular highlight. All the improv favourites are present: forgotten names, dodgy accents and games of one-upmanship, as performers place one another in awkward situations. At times it did lapse into laziness, especially given some of the more juvenile humour, but for the most part the performers' skill - and the show itself - was excellent.

C, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 6.55pm (7.55pm), £5.50 - £10.50, fpp 89. [al]

tw rating 4/5



**SNAP OF THE DAY:** The all important prop item for an open air show at the Edinburgh Fringe. Traverse show 'En Route' takes place on the streets of the city.

Photo: Kate Edwards

## DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

### Accelerate

Pure Dance

Abstract movement can be hard to process. Without any narrative or thematic context, our brains struggle to make sense of bodies flying through the air, sweeping arm gestures and athletic postures. Watching contemporary dance act 'Accelerate', I found myself sometimes mesmerised by the performers bounding across the stage, sometimes confused, and sometimes bored, mainly because the show had no coherent structure. Too often, it resembled a studio exercise in moving expressively to music, rather than a developed and meaningful piece, while the dancers' impressive grace and technical accomplishment couldn't mask the show's lack of an emotional core. With their evident talent, it's a shame that this group haven't

managed to channel their abilities into a project of real artistic vision.

C soco, 4 - 30 Aug, 4.35pm (5.25pm), £5.50 - £10.50, fpp 142. [ac]

tw rating 3/5

### Duality

Sulochana K.Sarma

The entrance of the elaborately adorned Sulochana K. Sarma commands a dramatic change in the atmosphere of the Merchants' Hall. Her presence is serene; graceful yet bold. Dancing with every inch of her being, her thousand subtleties of expression suggest that even the thoughts are dancing around inside her head. Each gesture is carefully calculated yet imbued with spontaneity, as the mere raising of a toe poignantly communicates volumes. Although we may not follow her story, nor be intended to, her engagement in it is enthralling, and

cont>>

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