

# ThreeWeeks IN EDINBURGH

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## CHILDREN'S SHOWS

### The Amazing Bubble Show

The Amazing Bubble Man

Bubbles, excited kids, and a lovable bubble man, what's not to like? Unlike a magician, who must maintain a distant mystique, the Amazing Bubble Man is able to create an immediate rapport with his young audience based upon a shared, enthusiastic love of bubbles. If his bubbles don't get you, his witty asides will, and by the end of this forty-five minute show, your spirits will be soaring up with the helium-filled bubbles floating about the ceiling. Square bubbles, bubbles inside bubbles, fog-filled bubbles, cute three year olds inside bubbles, solar system bubbles, edible bubbles. Oh, for heaven's sake, just go. It's like the very best birthday party, ever.

C 100, 5 - 30 Aug (not 17), 12.30pm (1.30pm), £5.50 - £9.50, fpp 8. [sl]  
tw rating 5/5

### Patrick Monahan - Stories and Tales for Kids, Who Can Run Faster Than Snails

Phil McIntyre Entertainment by Arrangement with Vivienne Smith Management

Patrick Monahan's rapport with children is heart-warming. In this colourful mish-mash of stand up, story-telling, music and movement, Monahan has them giggling and clapping along with delight, and their parents all seem thoroughly entertained too. The charismatic stand up hugs dads, squirts water pistols and teaches kung fu moves as well as wittily responding to questions and quips from his enraptured audience. Every child is also generously offered the chance to clamber onstage and join in the fun, which is brilliant, as kids can get involved regardless of where they're seated. The interaction is effortlessly quirky, and even the rather haphazard structure of the show adds to the eccentric charm of this jolly slice of children's slapstick.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 4 - 29 Aug (not 9, 10, 23, 24), 3.15pm (4.15pm), £5.00 - £8.00, fpp 15. [gjs]  
tw rating 4/5

### The Princess And The Pea - And The Pigman

C theatre

The audience of three to seven year olds was in no mood to be toyed with; entertain us or we'll squirm and squeal and make life unpleasant for anyone unfortunate enough to be on stage! Luckily, the kids and their parents were enraptured by this engaging re-imagining of 'The Princess and the Pea'. Five hard-working performers tackled multiple roles, moving fluidly from live action to shadow puppets, playing talking pigs and cross-dressing as other characters. The complicated story line was probably impossible for younger audience members to follow, but made the play more engaging for their parents, and with the friendly actor/kid interaction, the enthusiastic ensemble kept their young audience mesmerised.

C, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 12.15pm (1.00pm), £4.50 - £8.50, fpp 16. [sl]  
tw rating 3/5



**SNAP OF THE DAY:** Intimidating stuff, Fourth Monkey Theatre Company bring 'A Clockwork Orange' to the stage, at theSpaces on the Mile. Photo: Kate Edwards

## COMEDY

### Andi Osho: Afroblighty

Stand Comedy Club/Just For Laughs Live

Where do you come from? That, Andi Osho tells us, is the question she asked herself some time ago, and this engaging and open hour of comedy is the result of her self-interrogation. 'Afroblighty' is a celebration of identity and culture, and Osho skips from wry observation to deftly drawn caricatures of her friends and family (as well as people she's just seen on the bus) with warmth and wit. Each joke seems to strike a particular cord with someone different in the audience, and she's great at playing off these responses to create a brilliant atmosphere. The show is a genuine triumph: Oshi is a comedian who has a lot to say, and she says it very, very well.

The Stand Comedy Club III & IV, 5 - 29 Aug (not 16), 5.35pm (6.35pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp 26. [crc]  
tw rating 4/5

### Tony Law: Mr Tony's Brainporium

Tony Law/The Stand Comedy Club

Law is scrappy, under-prepared and leaps on whatever bonkers comments pop into his head - he is also the best comedian I have seen so far this year. Wearing a body glove made from "buoyant Kevlar", he effortlessly displays possession of that enviable talent of infecting his audience with his own sense of humour, meaning jokes which from other mouths would seem lamely 'whacky' are, in

his company, instant hits. A favourite was a skit in which he convinced us that the venue's black curtains concealed "forty acres of sea" with "loads of tugboats moving around". He has a singular turn of phrase and when a joke doesn't land - a frequent but never awkward occurrence - he makes back the laughs with riotous self-deprecation and grinning charm. Highly recommended.

The Stand Comedy Club II, 5 - 29 Aug (not 16), 12.30pm (1.30pm), £7.00 - £8.00, fpp 135. [kb]  
tw rating 4/5

### Gary Delaney: Purist

CKP

The blurb for this show promises lots of jokes but no narrative or themes, and it does exactly what it says on the tin; Delaney delivers an almost non-stop torrent of one liners, which are constantly, consistently funny. From time to time he varies the pace - giving us time to catch our breaths - by incorporating some AV material, but the quick-fire one-liners are what Delaney is famed for, and rightly so. As promised there was no whimsy, no storytelling, just hilarious gag after hilarious gag. He judged the audience on our response to his more off-colour jokes; luckily we appeared quite depraved, and were treated to a brilliant barrage of bad-taste humour to close.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 29 Aug (not 16), 8.30pm (9.25pm), £7.50 - £9.50, fpp 66. [al]  
tw rating 4/5

### Geraldine Quinn - Shut Up And Sing

Geraldine Quinn

As infectious as a really good pop song, the spandex-swathed Geraldine Quinn straddles comedy and cabaret while guiding us through what it takes to write a hit. The Wagga Wagga-born performer (perhaps a career in comedy was inevitable) serves up sharply-observed parodies, covering everything from bubblegum beats to tween country angst. This last perhaps lacks some of the originality of the rest: Pippa Evans has already brought the crazy-girl-with-acoustic-guitar character to prominence. Quinn's song-writing and her voice are genuinely impressive on their own merits, especially in the show-stopping 'Camel Toe' and the deliciously tasteless 'Gallipoli'. Like a black thong under a sheer leotard, her affection for and knowledge of pop shines through.

Underbelly, Cowgate, 5 - 29 Aug (not 18), 10.20pm (11.20pm), £8.00 - £10.50, fpp 67. [gg]  
tw rating 4/5

### Bonus Material

The Lincoln Company

Framed against the backdrop of a dysfunctional behind-the-scenes film, 'Bonus Material' comprises content that is rich and varied, and boasts some strong performances, as well as moronic mess-ups. Unquestionably, the comic highlight of the piece is the character of the scriptwriter -

cont>>

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cont>> a maniacal tramp, struggling with the demands of his imaginary friend. It's not only worryingly believable, but hilarious enough to give an unnervingly enjoyable jaw cramp. Some characters miss their full comic potential; the outlandish and farcical ones are in need of straighter counterparts to help lift their punch-lines. However, after two further jaw cramps, one raspberry juice shower, and a condom coated sausage, it's safe to say that 'Bonus Material' provides a simple premise, but a very passable character based comedy.

C, 4 – 30 Aug (not 16), 10.15pm (11.05pm), £7.50 – £10.50, fpp 36. [np]

tw rating 3/5

**Joe Rowntree: Peaceful Worrier**  
Joe Rowntree  
How to review a comedian who freely admits to being devastated when criticized and uses stand-up as therapy for his myriad psychological afflictions? Does pointing out he's not funny make me a douche-bag? I come not to bury Joe Rowntree, but to implore him: get better. Rowntree's show, in which he discusses his OCD and hypochondria via anecdotes of his truly stupid exploits whilst travelling abroad (really, this is the least sawy tourist you'll ever encounter) is often rather interesting but unfortunately rarely very funny. Rowntree is a likeable presence and he delivers enough gags to show there's potential for him to cultivate a tighter, funnier act with this material. He just hasn't done it yet.

Gilded Balloon Tsviot, 4 – 29 Aug, 7.45pm (8.45pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp 79. [kc]

tw rating 2/5

**Josh Howie: Gran Slam**  
Chambers Management

Howie presents an affable, friendly demeanour in this comedy show, which could more accurately be called a nice chat with a few jokes chucked in; it's far from side-splitting, but the show works due to Howie's warmth and charm. His tales of life with his Gran are peppered with pop-culture references and his witty asides range comfortably from high to low brow with abandon. Once or twice his more controversial gags – especially those on race – seem slightly misjudged, as some members of the audience seem to miss his ironic delivery, but such awkward moments are rare. This show isn't sexy, racy or challenging, but it is very nice. Much like having a cup of tea with your Gran, in fact.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 – 29 Aug (not 16), 9.45pm (10.40pm), £8.50 - £11.50, fpp 81. [al]

tw rating 3/5

**Kate Fox News**  
News just in... Kate Fox is very good at what she does. A poet and stand-up comedian, Fox has blended the two trades and come up with a humorous and engaging retelling of her life. Raised by swingers during the Thatcher era, she witnessed the burning of the 'Satanic Verses' as she eloped with a gunrunner and worked at a radio station which accidentally played 'What took you so long' when the Queen Mum died. There were some laugh out loud moments but I spent the majority of the show simply marvelling at her quirky command of the English language and enthralled by her tales. Whether you're a poetry lover or not, Fox is a wonderful storyteller and this is a gem of a show.  
Gilded Balloon, 4 – 30 Aug (not 16), 12.15pm (1.15pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp 83. [ka]

tw rating 3/5

## DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

**Continent**  
CAVA  
"Bring your friends, families and dogs" were the parting words of CAVA star Kazuaki Maruyama last night; it's a statement that very much helps to sum up 'Continent', a show which caters for all with its ambitious balance of comedy, farcical contemporary dance and 1950s cartoon. A relentlessly up-beat soundtrack accompanies the silent tale of a novelist's labour, continually disrupted by rogue characters and corrupt publishers. Outrageous facial expressions, endless misunderstandings and Hiroyuki Fuzisiro's impressive depiction of a robot kept the audience amused. I wasn't laughing as much by the end, however, as the music and the actors' sheer enthusiasm were beginning to overwhelm me. Despite this, the show is well

worth a look and is sure to immerse you you in its own imagination.

C Venues, 4 – 30 Aug (not 16), 7.20pm (8.15pm), £5.50 - £10.50, fpp 145. [eg]

tw rating 3/5

## EVENTS

**Free Daily Walks Down The Royal Mile**  
Edinburgh Festival Guides Association  
If you think of the Royal Mile as a kind of obstacle course or exercise in flyer dodging, then this tour will make you change your mind. Place yourself in the hands of an experienced guide for an excellent introduction to Edinburgh's hidden history and architecture, and along the way you'll pick up some great titbits (just how did the Edinburgh Tattoo get its name?) and city stories, from the scandal of Lord and Lady Stair to the inspiration behind 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'. The tour touches on many famous landmarks and museums, so it's also sure to be helpful when it comes to planning the rest of your visit.  
Cannonball House, 3 - 30 Aug, times vary, free, ffp 159. [crc]

tw rating 4/5

**MUSIC**  
**Out Of The Blue**  
Out Of The Blue are Eleven young men who rise above the need for such trivial things like musical instruments combine their voices to induce awe and laughter from their captivated audience. These unmissable Oxford undergraduates, with their pulsating a cappella cover versions of modern pop and indie classics, delivered a set which included beautiful harmonies and hilarious, eye-popping dances that were choreographed and executed to perfection. Their short, sweet set of songs was great fun, appealing to all the senses, and had something for everyone; I, too, found myself clapping along to these instantly recognisable songs. This is an absolutely unforgettable musical experience that is, without doubt, a must-see for music fans of all ages.  
C plaza, 5 – 30 Aug (not 20), 4.15pm (5.05pm), £5.50 - £10.50, fpp 196. [dc]

tw rating 5/5

## MUSICALS AND OPERA

**Sweet Talk** Melodramatters  
Displaying the gritty reality of romance between prison cell inmates, Paveley and Hardy's musical offers an intuitive introspection into the sexual psychology of those on the inside... and the voices are good too; notes are sung comfortably with rich timbre and vibrato. Yet one feels that these characters aren't cut cleanly enough and that their environment does not impose upon them the restrictions you would expect. As a result, the message – that men prefer women metaphorically 'imprisoned', while women are ever-trying to 'break out' – seems predictable and stilted. The music, despite starting promisingly, ultimately ends up as under-developed as the characters. A thought-provoking idea, but the weak realisation didn't allow the show's virtues to flourish.  
C aquila, 5 – 30 Aug (not 17), 3.45pm (4.45pm), £6.50 – £9.50, fpp 219. [ah]

tw rating 3/5

**The Last Five Years**  
LCubed  
The beauty of Jason Robert Brown's two-person musical lies in the simplicity of the production; the music and lyrics do all the talking, and the clever structure portrays Cathy and Jamie's bitter-sweet relationship by running Jamie's story chronologically from the start of the relationship while showing Cathy's story backwards. Though I'm not convinced by the chemistry of the couple in this particular production, the acting is sound, the voices are soaring (though bear in mind there are two casts performing alternately) and the orchestra plays beautifully. The music won't necessarily have you tapping your toes and singing along, but it's certainly hummable and is punctuated with events many will recognise from their own romantic experiences. A pared-down production that offers some moments of real tenderness.  
C aquila, 5 – 30 Aug, 10.30pm (11.50pm), £7.50 - £10.50, fpp 213. [gjs]

tw rating 3/5

## THEATRE

**The Love Of A Clown**  
Backhand Theatre In Association with C Theatre  
Suitcase shenanigans and an innocent tale of love and loss; the reflections of a lonely clown who chooses the laughter of a thousand strangers over the love of a woman. Chris Kinahan's comical and moving storytelling is interspersed with clowning, mime and puppetry, accompanied by Ben Laurence's delightful soundtrack. As we are taken on tour with the circus and introduced to Montmartre locals, particularly charming are the melancholic Madame Muscat – a bar-dwelling widow brought to life by the exquisitely expressive hands of puppeteer Jake Linzey – and circus proprietor Francois, created from just a hat and a cigar. Poetic, highly physical and thoroughly engaging; we are left wanting more. Heartbreaking and heartwarming, for the young and the young at heart.  
C socio, 4 – 30 Aug (not 16), 6:45pm (7.30pm), £6.50 - £9.50, ffp 268. [hm]

tw rating 4/5

**Mackenzie Taylor: No Straightjacket Required** Green Room Presents  
I never thought that the story of a suicide attempt would make me laugh out loud. But comedian Mackenzie Taylor has drawn on his own experience of mental illness to create a show that is both disarmingly frank and funny. As he says himself, 'No Straightjacket Required' is not strictly stand-up but rather a "story with jokes", and part of the show's strength lies in Taylor's ability to mix comedic riffs (on NHS waiting lists and art therapy, for example) with a candid and absorbing account of his life and loves. Building a conversational rapport with his audience, he combines quick wit with a gut-wrenching matter-of-factness. Now in its second Fringe year, this comes highly recommended.

C socio, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 2.05pm (3.00pm), £7.50 - £10.50, ffp 269. [crc]

tw rating 4/5

**Wealth**  
Elephant Foot  
Ben Charland's 'Wealth' is a very difficult play – and not 'good' difficult, either. The story might take place in a metaphysical hinterland where two survivors of the Rwandan genocide attempt to imbue a 'living doll' with memories of the atrocity, but your guess is literally as good as mine. Although performers are keen, and the 'doll' is an occasionally compelling physical device, the direction leaves the actors as lost as the audience. Thematically, there is potential in the project, but the navel-gazing script frustrates at every turn; questions are answered with questions, nothing is ever resolved or explained. Perhaps that is the point – 'fuck hope', as one character drily puts it – but as a dramatic device, it proves fatal.  
C socio, 4 – 30 August (not 16), 4.35pm (5.35pm), £7.50 - £10.50, fpp 303. [fm]

tw rating 2/5

**Virtuous Flock**  
N10 Productions  
N10 Productions jump start the Fringe with Gothic prowess and sadomasochistic zeal. The successful fusion of farce and macabre horror in this new play by member Billy Barrett introduces audiences to Penny Dreadful, and her morbidly hilarious murdering of three women bickering over her father's will. Throughout, the company exhibit their musical talents in farcical fashion, and their impressive understanding of various theatrical styles, but the show's potential is stifled by confusingly abstracted scene changes, not to mention a lack of variety in intonation and comic timing, which sometimes forces punchlines under the radar. Also, parents – the grotesque comedy of a maid being ravaged with a screwdriver may be unsuitable. However, the play's undeniable promise easily outweighs any aesthetic oversights.  
C socio, 4 – 21 Aug, 1.20pm (2.10pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp 302. [np]

tw rating 3/5

**Belt Up's Quasimodo**  
Belt Up Theatre  
What lengths will love drive us to? Belt Up explore this question in their original retelling of 'The Hunchback of Notre Dame'. The audience are led by the hand into an unsettling courtroom environment, and we play judge and jury, bearing witness to everything from the lovingly tender to the

alarmingly dramatic; be warned that there is mild audience interaction and you will be surrounded by the action, but don't be intimidated – it simply makes for a more immersive experience. Fantastic acting, great set and perfectly composed music complete this compelling production, though occasionally the evocative music does overwhelm the actors' voices and a few scenes are a little too long. However, the narrative, performances and interactive elements create a truly enthralling show.

C socio, 4 – 30, (only even days) 11pm (12pm), £7.50 - £9.50, fpp 231. [sk]

tw rating 4/5

**Belt Up's 'Atrium'**  
Belt Up Theatre  
Belt Up don't just put on a play, but rather create a world and insist that you become part of it. In the cramped and claustrophobic setting of 'Atrium' this means becoming complicit with a protagonist who would rather create absurd, darkly comic fantasies than tell the truth to the man ghost-writing his memoirs. The show's four performers have a great aptitude for surreal comedy, but they are equally capable of producing some moments of startling pathos, and though the play does not provide any great insight into the mind of a serial fantasist and could benefit from greater depth, it makes a very successful showcase for the company's acting and design talent. Belt Up certainly have style.

C socio, 5 – 29 Aug, 11.00pm (12.00pm), £7.50 - £10.50, fpp 230. [jm]

tw rating 4/5

**A Big Day For The Goldbergs**  
Liriope Productions/New End Theatre  
Like a television soap, only infinitely better, 'A Big Day For The Goldbergs' is a story based on the lives of two Jewish sisters growing up with their single-parent mother. One sister runs away to the circus whilst the other is in the early stages of pregnancy, and their elusive mother - only met via impersonation - is humorously melodramatic throughout. Whilst this may seem like the makings of a dull social-commentary, reserve your judgements, because the talented duo perform with such honesty and directness that within minutes, we are hooked. Whilst 'A Big Day For The Goldbergs' will not leave your heart racing, it will, like a warm drink on a cold day, leave you feeling pleasantly comforted.  
C central, 5- 30 Aug (not 13, 17, 20, 27), 6.15pm (7.05pm), £7.50 - £10.50, fpp 231. [sh]

tw rating 4/5

**Consequences**  
Cafe Society  
A rotting corpse, a suicide note in the fridge and two policemen facing a moral dilemma set the scene for Duncan Battman's thought provoking drama. The aforementioned note links deceased librarian Norman to the death of young prostitute Ursula twenty years before, but as the story unfolds (cup by cup of sugary tea) their unlikely relationship overturns our assumptions. Compassionate performances by the cast of four – who skilfully play out the spectrum of tender, humorous and profound moments with great conviction and attention to detail – make this a moving piece that strikes a chord with our judgemental selves and raises questions about the consequences of our actions, be they intentional or not, and the murky ambiguity of right and wrong.  
Sweet Grassmarket, 5 – 15 Aug, 2.35pm (3.45pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp 239. [hm]

tw rating 4/5

**The Pantry Shelf**  
Team M & M  
"Are you saying I need to sex up my oats?" is just one of the comedic, food-based lines that make this conceptually clever piece so enjoyable. Immediately thrust into the madcap world of talking food, the play begins with the awakening screech of a wasabi pea tub and doesn't look back. Soon, we are presented with the hilariously varied ways in which corn chips, chocolate, peas, a quinoa bar and porridge oats could advertise themselves as viable snacks for purchaser Mandy. Although the large number of blackouts and lack of room slightly slow the pace, any loss of atmosphere is made up for by the buzzing delivery of every line. A feast for the eyes, and very much worth a watch.  
Sweet Grassmarket, 5 - 30 Aug, 12.45pm (1.40pm), £6.50 - £8.00, fpp 278. [sh]

tw rating 4/5

**What Becomes An End?**  
The Graduate  
A self-important play about death: not most people's idea of lunch time entertainment, and 'What Becomes An End?' is definitely a bit of a downer. It follows the final hours of Dan, its cheerless protagonist, as he comes to terms with his failing health and contemplates the emptiness of his life. Comprising dramatic vignettes and ponderous monologues, this work is slow and with a pre-determined outcome (Dan's demise is announced at the beginning), which denies the play any narrative progression. The small cast are competent actors, creating a powerful sense of menace at crucial moments, but are unable to really elevate the dismal material, so the main question on my mind was 'when does this end?'  
C aquila, Aug 5 – 21, 12.30pm (1.20pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp 303. [ac]

tw rating 2/5

**Belt Up's 'Odyssey'**  
Belt Up Theatre  
This is a high energy, high concept show from this very talented young company. Belt Up's 'Odyssey' is a clever post-apocalyptic fantasy following a poet smuggling a precious ancient book (guess what) back to his native New York after a nuclear war between the UK and US. It looks like a feverish dream and feels just as uncomfortable, with the audience kept on their feet and pulled into the action. It's very fast, extremely loud and possibly a bit confusing if you don't know the source material, especially when lines are drowned out; a few less frenzied moments would add variety to the pace and allow an audience time to appreciate the show's impressive visuals instead of being overwhelmed by them.

C socio, 4 – 30 Aug, 1.00pm (2.00pm), £7.50 - £10.50, fpp 230. [jm]

tw rating 3/5

**Mussolini- A One Man Political Farce**  
Ross Gurney-Randall  
This engaging one-man portrayal of the rise and fall of Mussolini will manage to capture even the most jaded of imaginations. The combination of simple yet effective props and aptly used sound effects eases the audience's journey through the twists and turns of twentieth century politics, though due to its historical and political focus, this is certainly a niche market performance, and some prior knowledge of the subject is required in order to fully understand Ross Gurney-Randall's intelligent humour. I did, however, learn something along the way; having just spent £10,000 on a history degree, I am convinced my love for the subject would have been vastly heightened by having this man as my teacher.  
Hill Street Theatre, 5 – 30 Aug (not 10,17,24), 3.15pm (4.15pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp 273. [sj]

tw rating 4/5

**The Dumb Waiter**  
The Lincoln Company  
Pinter opens 'The Dumb Waiter' very much in a manner you would expect from a master of the mundane: with a man repeatedly tying and untying his shoelaces. His colleague glares at him from behind a newspaper, a quick temper lurking menacingly close to the surface of his brooding exterior. These hitmen have found themselves killing time in a grotty basement as they wait for details of their next job: however, instead of assassination instructions they get food orders. As the task ahead looms closer, and the demands from above get more ridiculous, exasperated cries of 'scampi?!' cut humorously through the tension. Both actors successfully balance the comic triviality with a sense of increasing unease and the occasional violent outburst in this absorbing dark comedy.

C socio, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 1.05pm (1.55pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp 247. [lj]

tw rating 3/5

## THREEWEEKS IN EDINBURGH

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**TW RATINGS EXPLAINED: 1/5 BAD | 2/5 MEDIOCRE | 3/5 GOOD | 4/5 VERY GOOD | 5/5 BRILLIANT**