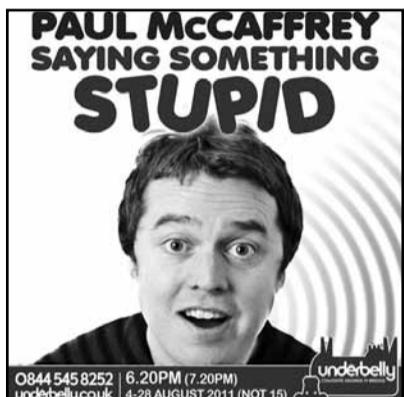


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CHILDREN'S SHOWS

A Timetraveller's Guide To Surviving Childhood

Swan Picnic / PBH's Free Fringe

A show featuring a camp Blackbeard teaching children how best to maim their opponents, and Freud delivering a sermon on cakes, has undeniable potential. At times this show is genuinely funny, but unfortunately it also features some lazy jokes and clumsy national stereotyping. The unnecessarily obnoxious American Zack's very inclusion in events—framed by a history lesson led by two stuffy English professors—is frankly bizarre. Much of the humour is either predictable or overdone, but there are a few delightful moments, especially when the earnest performers appear to have fun with the show and enjoy the audience interaction. Arrive early as the children at the front received the most attention and clearly got the best out of the show.

Ryan's Cellar Bar, 5 - 29 Aug (not 7, 14, 21, 28), 2.30pm (3.30pm), free, fpp29. tw rating 3/5 [hw]

COMEDY

Damian Clark: Stand Up

Damian Clark

A popular beer brand currently has the slogan 'Good Call'. Picture the two Australian men in this advert. Imagine one of them without hair and you'll have Damian Clark's long-lost twin. Smiley, light-hearted and affable, Clark greets everyone entering this obscenely hot venue; his charm is put even more on display when he instantly donates his bottle of water to a fainting audience member. His best moments occur during his interactions with the audience; he is fantastic at improvising and possesses natural comedic flair. Inoffensive, conventional and enjoyable, his sunny observational humour is perfect for a group of friends with different tastes. Not ground-breaking material, but nevertheless feel-good and fun, Clark is a definite 'Good Call'.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, Aug 10-28 10pm, £7.00-9.00, Fpp.62 tw rating 4/5 [lmm]

Des Bishop – My Dad Was Nearly James Bond

Off The Kerb Productions

Laughter is the best medicine and it certainly works here. Des Bishop delivers a fine-tuned insight into his childhood, his family and his father's diagnosis with terminal lung cancer. Not a typical topic for a comedy show, but then this is no ordinary comedian. With a core message about family relationships and making each moment count, Bishop's show is a charmingly funny tribute to his dad. Avoiding over-sentimentality, the comedian generates laughter from the topics of dodgy 80s fashion, the emotionless Irish and his father's brief acting career. There is good reason why Des Bishop packs out a venue. With a grand finale that is far from shaken and stirred, this show will make you walk out smiling.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 14 Aug, 9.10pm, £12.50 - £14.00, fpp66. tw rating 5/5 [ep]

The 2 Sides of Eddie Ramone

A new play by Chris Sullivan

6pm at the Royal College of Surgeons
Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DW

"a gripping look at the both the humour and pain of the tragic comic... Chris Sullivan's performance is his most memorable to date."

All Seats
£5

SPACE @Venue 53
www.thospaceuk.com

Ed Byrne: Crowd Pleaser

Phil McIntyre Entertainments By Arrangements With Vivienne Smith Management

Talented and renowned comedian Ed Byrne returns to the Fringe with a new set of brilliant material. Topics such as current affairs, adorably nerdy dilemmas and family life are tackled, and each and every joke is told with the liveliness, style and zeal that are so characteristic of the comedian. Byrne's expert performance not only lives up to its name in 'pleasing' the crowd, but goes beyond it, prompting continuous laughter from beginning to end, to the extent that it provokes teary eyes and aching jaws. The only downside is that it simply does not seem to last long enough, and the hour is gone too quickly; but what else can one expect from a crowd pleaser? Time flies.

Venue 150 @ EICC, 3 - 27 Aug (not 10), 7.40pm (8.40pm), £15.50 - £18.50, fpp69. tw rating 5/5 [ma]

Edinburgh Bloody Edinburgh

Davytheghost

A gripping hour of gruesome stories is delivered by an historian who unashamedly blends blood with puns and props. Filling his stories with gory details and cheap gags, the involved descriptions of finger-bursting thumbscrews and eyes burnt out with quicklime will particularly appeal to horror fans. 'Edinburgh Bloody Edinburgh' is occasionally let down by Davytheghost's delivery, which lacks variety in tone and at times feels hurried, while at one point, he clunkily switches to a first-person narrative for the perspective of Burke the body-snatcher, but this does not fit well with his other stories. Delivery aside, this is an entertaining show that will shock and amuse, and the final story definitely deserves to be told to a full room.

The Wee Windae, 5 - 29 Aug, 6pm (7.30pm) and 7.15pm (8.45pm), £10.00 - £12.00, fpp70. tw rating 3/5 [jfb]

5-Step Guide To Being German - Free

Paco Erhard / Free Festival

With jokes about the War alongside a healthy sprinkling of F-words and C-words, it seems that this free show takes no time to get stuck into the predictable. And yet Erhard manages to present an amusing account of the expected nationalist clichés without depending on them entirely; his sharp and recognisably cringeworthy observations of the British on holiday serve only to gauge his capacity to identify the strangeness of stereotyping nations. A clever closing twist demands a rethink of the whole show. Can there really be just five steps to becoming part of a nation? Find out, and try to bag yourself a good seat - or, perhaps, lounger [towels not necessary].

Laughing Horse @ The Three Sisters, 5 - 28 Aug (not 8, 13, 20, 27), 6.00pm (6.45), free, fpp75. tw rating 4/5 [lc]

Edinburgh Tonight With Joe Simmons and Lorraine Chase

Any newcomer to the Festival should start their Edinburgh experience with 'Edinburgh



SNAP OF THE DAY: Laura Hayden appears in 'I Didn't Mean To Be A Virgin In The 80s' at Sweet Grassmarket. Photo: Stuart Armitt

Tonight', a TV-format talk-show that previews acts every evening from across the Festival.

Finnish a capella group Fork kick off the proceedings tonight with an impressively original version of 'Toxic', while poet Eric Davidson performs a moving piece about how Edinburgh locals should embrace the Festival. The show finished with Tom Stade cracking hilarious 'married jokes' to a laughing unmarried audience. It feels a bit like being in a television studio, and hosts Joe Simmons and Lorraine Chase (the latter presumably more used to being the interviewee) handle unexpected technical blunders like pros. You will be delighted not only with the free tickets every act hands out, but also with the celebrity interviews, and snippets of music, dance and comedy.

SpaceCabaret, 5 - 27 Aug (not 22), 4.50pm (5.45pm), £7.00 - £10.00, fpp70. tw rating 4/5 [tw]

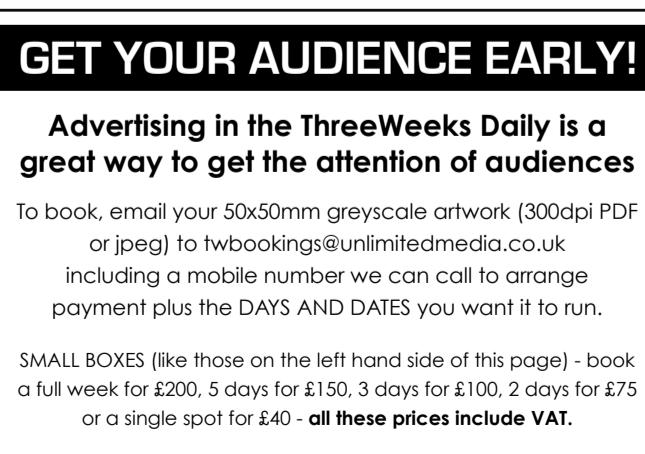
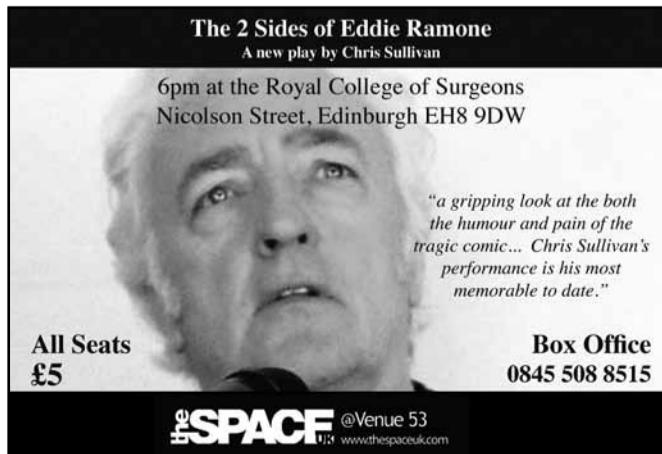
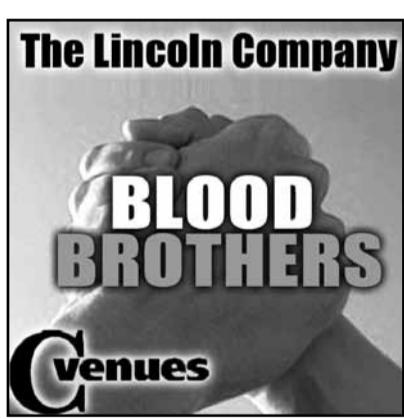
AAA Batteries (Not Included)

Liam Williams, Chris Turner, Adam Hess

This audience-participation show was, sadly, hit-or-miss. Of the hits: Liam Williams. Having created the best audience rapport, as well as being the most natural on stage, Williams is the true highlight of this show. Although Chris Turner shows much promise initially and finishes with a sensational finale, his pun-tastic routine becomes slightly soggy in the middle. The final act, Adam Hess, struggles to find his rhythm throughout an ill-structured routine, though he eventually manages to squeeze a few laughs from the audience. Perhaps a simple switch of performers would solve many of this show's shortcomings, which is bound to get better with each day of the festival. See it, but leave the kids at home.

Laughing Horse - Meadow Bar, 4 - 28 Aug, 2.45pm (3.45pm), free, fpp32. tw rating 3/5 [ae]

for quick recommends www.twitter.com/twittique



A Betrayal Of Penguins: Endangered For A Reason

Betrayal Of Penguins

When a zombie outbreak happens at the Oscars and two sports commentators try to kill one another, you know that you're witnessing a very different kind of sketch show. *Betrayal Of Penguins* bring a chaotic bunch of sketches to the stage, wherein playing a female character means removing your trousers and one character in every scene requires a ridiculous accent. Aaron Heffernan in particular displays an excitable comedic style very similar to that of Lee Evans, making his performance a definite highlight. A superb and jaw-achingly hilarious hour of comedy, that, for all its mayhem, is the perfect sketch show. These boys are set to have a great month, so don't miss out! *Gilded Balloon Teviot*, 3 - 29 Aug (not 19, 20), 5.45pm (6.45pm), £7.50 - £9.50, fpp48. tw rating 5/5 [lam]

ACME Stand-up

Alex Cissold-Jones, Chris Turner and Matt Richardson

Standard yet polished comedy fare is in abundance in this three-piece stand-up show. Compere Matt Richardson engages the audience well with his likeable banter – a word the first comedian Alex Cissold-Jones would no doubt cringe at, as this and several other fairly well-trodden comedy routines are discussed in his set. Nevertheless, a few big laughs still surface from his performance, but none quite so large as with the final comedian Chris Turner. With his mixture of puns and deadpan humour, Turner is the closest to something truly original and innovative in the show. Like most ACME products, this fails to go off with a bang, but it is certainly still an entertaining hour of free comedy.

The Newsroom, 5 - 28 Aug, 7.45pm (8.45pm), free, fpp33 tw rating 3/5 [jgc]

An Austrian, An Italian And Someone From Slough

Cecilia Delatori, Giacinto Palmieri, Alice Frick

The title of this show really says it all, and there's unfortunately not much more in the way of depth. But as our guitar-strumming host Cecilia (someone from Slough) meets and greets, we're treated to some beautifully quaint and charming acoustic music. After settling us with some stories about her hometown (where the first Mars Bar was manufactured), she introduces an exuberant and perfectly pitched Austrian comic Alice Frick. Italian comedian Giacinto Palmieri's academic investigation into language proves, at times, fascinating. The show is let down, however, by its London-influenced content, with many gags about specifically English preoccupations and Hackney cabs; it's a shame more effort didn't go into broadening its appeal to a wider audience.

Lauding Horse @ Meadow Bar, 4 - 28 Aug, 6.30pm (7.30pm), free, fpp41. tw rating 3/5 [ajl]

A Mixed Bag

Lauding Horse Free Festival

It can be depressing when comedians lower your expectations before you even enter the room. Arrogance can be wearying. Shame, then, that Paul Langton, our first comic, is the standard cookie-cutter aggressive 'DON'T YOU HATE THE ROYAL WEDDING?' comedian. He's like a macho Stewart Lee, with Lee's lack of punchlines and attempted emotional appeals to the audience, but then he smothers his own sensitivity with gruff masculine nonsense. The second comic, Alex Love, is a constant apologist for himself, his appearance, his jokes, his career, his venue, his everything. The biggest laugh in the entire show is when a member of the audience says the phrase 'bog salmon'. A mixed bag? In terms of quality, no.

The Three Sisters, 4 - 28 Aug, 6.15pm (7.15pm), free, fpp120. tw rating 1/5 [jh]

Around The World In 80 Men! - Free

Joanne Jollie

In an absolutely jam-packed upstairs room of a pub, Joanne Jollie entertains a receptive crowd with enthralling tales about the various men from her chequered dating history. An eminently likeable lady, she has a fair set of pipes on her; this is amply demonstrated when she illustrates her tales by belting out a number of classic soul and disco hits, alongside three self-written songs. Though the comedy in her act is not particularly original, covering such well-worn subjects as online dating, it is an entertaining, unchallenging show. It's the

kind of show where one can just switch off and let the entertainment wash over you, and sometimes at the Festival, this is exactly what is needed.

Lauding Horse @ The Beehive Inn, 4 - 28 Aug, 4.15pm (5.15pm), free, fpp8. tw rating 3/5 [im]

Oliver Meech : Live Brain Surgery - Free

Oliver Meech / *Lauding Horse Festival*

Despite both Oliver Meech's medical attire and the title's suggestion of on-stage neurosurgery, it transpires that 'Live Brain Surgery' is in fact a more abstract affair. Using a combination of brain-related trivia and a penchant for psychological magic, this show aims to baffle and amuse with a series of audience-participation tricks. Meech is funny and endearing, peppered the gig with a lot of well-pitched gags and foreshadowing further tricks with impressive showmanship. However, this show uses many techniques we've seen before and one can't help but think this is like a smaller-scale Derren Brown performance. Nevertheless, the concept is fun, the audience are impressed and Meech's presentation is excellent - well worth a look.

Lauding Horse @ The Three Sisters, 5 - 28 Aug (not 16), 6.30pm (7.30pm), free, fpp5. tw rating 4/5 [ec]

DANCE & PHYSICAL THEATRE

Pinocchio: A Fantasy Of Pleasures

Company XIV

Carved from a block of wood, Pinocchio springs to life, bouncing and jittering around the stage. Far from a tiny Italian village, the world into which he is born is decadent and majestic, filled with sumptuous Venetian masks and intricate, twirling red ribbons. Yet once the puppet dares to delve into the realm of "Pleasure Island", his surroundings begin to resemble a dark and seedy biker's club, with dominatrices cracking leather whips. An artistic delight, this neo-baroque production is a ravishing fusion of opera, ballet, commedia dell'arte, street dance, burlesque, and Fellini-inspired surrealism. Indulge your visual and aural fantasies with this extravagant performance packed with spectacular pirouetting and sensual, seamless movement. The fairytale is reinvented magnificently.

New Town Theatre, 4 - 28 Aug, 7.00pm (8.10pm), £12.00 - £14.00, fpp175. tw rating 4/5 [fm]

EXHIBITIONS

Anish Kapoor: Flashback

Kapoor is an artist at the top of his game. 'Flashback' is a small exhibition, featuring only two works, but the two complement each other perfectly. The first is an early work entitled 'White Sand, Red Millet, Many Flowers' (1982), a collection of four pigment sculptures. These are at once natural in appearance and abstract, and seem so fragile that one could imagine a small gust of wind blowing them away. Juxtaposed against this is 'Untitled' (2010). At over 5 metres tall this giant blood-red "self-generating" wax sculpture couldn't be more different from the former work and highlights the artistic development of Kapoor's career. Be sure to head up to the balcony to appreciate the great view from above.

Edinburgh College of Art, 4 Aug - 9 Oct, 10.00am (5.00pm), free, fpp n/a. tw rating 4/5 [mp]

Ingrid Calame

The Fruitmarket Gallery

Making art out of the ground we walk on, American artist Ingrid Calame produces beautifully abstract drawings and paintings with meticulousness. These works, created between 1994 and 2011 - and including an impressive wall drawing created especially for the Gallery - are the result of an intricate and obsessive process of tracing the marks, stains and cracks on the ground of urban locations, and layering these into rich arrangements, or "constellations".

Her pencil drawings on tracing paper are delicate and topographical and fascinating to analyse and deconstruct, whilst her polished enamel paintings have bold, beautiful colour palettes. Although the works are somewhat repetitive in their visual vocabulary, losing yourself in these wild landscapes of lines, shapes and colour is an entrancing visual experience.

The Fruitmarket Gallery, 5 Aug - 9 Oct, times vary, free, fpp n/a. tw rating 4/5 [jb]

MUSICALS & OPERA

Sunday In The Park With George

One Academy Productions

This is a charming musical that brings to life Georges Seurat's famous painting, and focuses on the artist's obsession with his work. The wonderfully talented cast lives up to the task of performing the musically challenging Sondheim classic, with its fast-paced lyrics and alarmingly diverse range of notes. For this, it is hard not to be impressed. Likewise, the faultless band help contribute to what is ultimately a very good show. Having said this, for me it was too long - by the end, many of the performers' voices were feeling the strain, and I'm dubious as to whether it was worthy of the standing ovation given to it by some of the audience at the end.

C, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15, 22), 3.35pm (5.35pm), £8.50 - £14.50, fpp234. tw rating 4/5 [ch]

THEATRE

Subsist

DBS Productions

We are sitting in complete darkness. This darkness seems to go on forever. Before the show has even begun, I am getting tingles down my arms. John-David Henshaw's beautifully written script, telling the story of four survivors struggling to live in a world that ended two years ago, ensures that this sensation continues for the best part of an hour. With characters that balance each other out to the point of perfection, you will find yourself connecting and sympathising with them more than you ever thought possible. The quality acting combined with an intimate venue and stark stage and lighting help contribute to this complete immersion in the modern horror that is unlike anything I have seen before.

Sweet Grassmarket, 4 - 21 Aug, 7.00pm (8.00pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp301. tw rating 4/5 [ch]

The Curse Of Macbeth

Cambridge University ADC

This is Macbeth seen through a shattered looking glass. Screams, whispers, and horrible faces haunt the stage through a series of nightmarish mirrors in this astonishing reworking of Shakespeare's play. The original script is effectively condensed, shot through with dissonant songs and black humour, creating an astonishingly intense experience. The murky happenings behind the mirrors dominate each scene, lending new, horrifying interpretations and almost overshadow an excellent cast. The piece has a terrible energy, quickly transforming the stage - and the characters - and sending them on a hellish descent into madness, dragging the audience with them. This is a bold, electrifying take on Macbeth and every element is seemingly flawless. I strongly urge you take a step through this looking glass.

The Playhouse at Hawke and Hunter Green Room, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15), 4.00pm (5.10pm), £9.50 - £10.50, fpp252. tw rating 5/5 [jc]

The Dipper - Free

Homewood Rose Theatre Company/*Lauding Horse Free Festival*

"Where would all you journalists be without people like me?" asks one of the characters. What would the Fringe be without shows like this? What the venue and acting skills lack, is made up for by enthusiasm and a wonderful script that is unconventional and charming. The show consists of two sisters - one good, one bad - a lady, and the Yard.

Lace and trench coats put the audience right into an Agatha Christie mood as they listen to the sisters arguing right and wrong. Is it better to live a decent life and deny who you are, or to be true to yourself even if that means deceit and dishonesty? Concentrating on the words, it makes for charming and light afternoon entertainment.

Lauding Horse @ The Newsroom, 5 - 12 Aug, 4.00pm (5.00pm), free, fpp256. tw rating 3/5 [vk]

The Good Doctor

Theatre Alba

Standing in a quiet, beautiful garden that tumbles down towards a sparkling blue lake - Duddingston Kirk is certainly not your typical Fringe venue. The village is just outside the city centre, eight minutes by taxi or a picturesque walk through Holyrood Park. 'The Good Doctor' - a dramatisation of Chekhov's short stories - is performed by a local amateur drama society and the whole thing has the excited feeling of a charming village fete. The cast are hilarious

and utterly delightful, and the fact that these are not professional actors, but teachers and social workers, adds a wonderful sense of authenticity to Chekhov's tales of comic provincial characters. Go for the gardens, for the beauty, and for the joy of this play.

Duddingston Kirk Manse Garden, 2 - 6 Aug, 12.30pm (11.45pm), £5.00 - £7.00, fpp267. tw rating 4/5 [jl]

The Life And Times Of Albert Lymes - Free

Tin Shed Theatre Co/*Lauding Horse Free Festival*

This is a hyperactive little one-man psychological comedy. Actor Justin Cliffe offers us a dozen characters who all bother poor Albert Lyme, a dull neurotic on a very bad day. Lyme is endearing, however, because everyone else in his world is so much worse. It's part confession and part pantomime, as we're carried along on Cliffe's rapid fire expressions; he's indebted to Terry Jones most of all, with his screeching falsetto when imitating women, his explosive grunting, and Lyme's bravura ticks. He deals well with a couple of mistakes and missed cues, moving too fast to linger on them. With visual tricks - a Scrabbleboard becomes a newspaper - and charmingly deliberate plot holes, this show is full of life.

Lauding Horse @ Cafe Renroc, 5 - 19 Aug, 6.05pm (7.05pm), free, fpp275. tw rating: 3/5 [gl]

Tin Girl Story

Don't Look Up Theatre Company

With all the substance of a romantically thwarted Mills and Boon novel, 'Tin Girl Story' was well intentioned but ultimately disappointing. The intriguing premise lacked depth and the clunky circular narrative remained as two-dimensional as the characters. Although Kate Gilbert did give a consistent - and at times even entrancing - performance, she was ultimately hindered by somewhat cumbersome, overindulgent writing. Michael Cretu's fantastical timbres created some interest in what could have been an otherwise tedious performance, and his longer melodic passages wove a beautiful yet tragic aesthetic. That said, the production was almost comically oversensualised and instances of rhyme felt uninspiring and leaden. If you like inoffensive cabaret or depressing romances then you might not find yourself entirely disappointed.

Zoo Southside, 5 - 15 Aug, 4.00pm (4.55pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp304. tw rating 2/5 [jb]

We Draupadi's and Sitas

Kali Theatre (India)

Shomshukla's hour long exploration 'woman' was delicately effective. Three generations of Indian women confidently reassessed the female perspectives of Draupadi and Sita, the women of patriarchal Indian epic tales 'The Ramayana' and 'The Mahabharata'. The enchantingly beautiful Sita, played by Sohini Mukherjee, shone throughout, emotionally and quite literally, as all the women were costumed in resplendent, shimmering dresses. 'We Draupadi's and Sitas' was an engaging account of what it means to be a woman, and was incredibly heartfelt and thought provoking, despite some nervousness in the performance, and the at times obscure nature of the monologues.

Given the sensitive subject matters involved, Shomshukla bravely presented Draupadi and Sita's positions—one may even say plights—and did so powerfully and respectfully.

Ceca, 3 - 16 Aug, 7.50pm (8.50pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp310. tw rating 3/5 [jc]

Wrens

Tiny Teapot Theatre

Women of the Royal Navy have come to enjoy the freedom and independence which serving in the war has offered them. What will they do when the war is over, when they have to return to their controlled and conventional lives? Seven women share a cabin on a navy base on Scapa; seven characters share their lives. The actors delicately and carefully distinguish their particular characteristics from one another; dutiful, homely, vain or wild; all they have in common is their love for cups of tea. The stage is transformed into realistic and claustrophobic barracks, and uniformed women give hints of their fragility when they gently sing longing tunes from the 1940s. All in all, a warm and insightful play.

Sweet Grassmarket, 4 - 28 Aug (not 17), 5.50pm (6.50pm), £9.00 - £7.00, fpp313. tw rating 4/5 [vk]

The Infant

Les Infants Terribles Theatre

Dark, macabre and thrilling, 'Les Infants Terribles' know how to put on a show. The stagecraft of this play puts it a cut above average; the sound is thrilling, and the carefully considered set with a black block, two doors and lights hanging low look creepy and enable slick scene changes. The play focuses on the paranoia of Samedi and Castogen - self appointed justice seekers - over a drawing they believe relates to terrorism, but which is actually the work of a four-year-old boy. The audience are drawn in as the characters lose all grip on reality. Witty and aesthetically excellent, Oliver Langley's play draws your attention to the excesses of society. Good theatre is not one of them, so buy a ticket.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15, 16), 2.35pm (3.35pm), £9.00 - £11.00, fpp271. tw rating 4/5 [sm]

Liberace: Live From Heaven

Norwell Lapley Productions Ltd

I walked through the wind and rain to see a tribute act to Liberace in a two thirds empty lecture theatre. Stephen Fry's voiceover as St Peter booms out, judging whether Liberace should enter heaven. The whole thing feels like a panto for grown-ups; one woman bursts into tears. Everything here is cheap: the jokes, the set, the music. But there's no reason to sneer over such things. The hour includes on-stage banter, catty gossip, smile-inducing sing-a-longs and at the end, a sublime simultaneous defence of both homosexuality and staying in the closet. This is a valiant defence of the gaudy and uncool, against the mocking over-dogs of taste and aesthetic decorum. It's also just great fun.

Assembly George Square, 3 - 28 Aug, 6.25pm (7.55pm), £12.00 - £14.00, fpp274. tw rating 4/5 [jh]

Lights, Camera, Walkies

Festival Highlights

'Lights, Camera, Walkies' is the tale of two rival dog trainers competing to land their prized pooches the starring role in a Hollywood blockbuster. The vaguely satirical piece is written by Tom Glover, finalist in the BBC's sitcom competition. Anyone who's seen any recent BBC sitcoms won't be surprised to learn that the writing's not great; it's an entertaining story, but a lot of the jokes are pretty hackneyed. However, the material is elevated by the talented cast of three (including Glover himself), whose performances frequently amuse. Particularly strong is Richard David-Caine, whose turns as one of the trainers and various flamboyant directors provide many of the highlights. It's no mongrel, but it's far from pedigree.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 - 29 Aug (not 10, 17), 2.00pm (3.15pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp275. tw rating 3/5 [im]

Lost In Mozart

Angry Young Men

Brimming with ideas, Angry Young Men's play mixes a string quartet with gangster rap in a homage to West Side Story. Unfortunately the play doesn't live up to the