

ThreeWeeks IN EDINBURGH

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Jason John Whitehead
letters from mindy

Jason John Whitehead should be in charge of this country. His ideas on compulsory drug taking and reclaiming the world from 'his bastard children' are pretty much a direct route to a better life for everyone! see Capital The Guardian

A genuine gift for trying the most outrageous things in the world. Amazingly hilarious! see Capital The Guardian

★★★★★ The Coaxian
★★★★★ Toronto Sun
★★★★★ Metro

Edinburgh
Edinburgh
Edinburgh

0844 545 8252 | 22.25PM (23.25PM)
underbelly.co.uk | 4-28 August 2011 (not 16)

PAUL McCAFFREY
SAYING SOMETHING STUPID

0844 545 8252 | 6.20PM (7.20PM)
underbelly.co.uk | 4-28 AUGUST 2011 (NOT 15)

RACHAEL'S CAFE

WORLD PREMIERE OF A NEW PLAY BY LUCY DANER

EVERYONE WELCOME NO EXCEPTIONS

How does Eric, a midwestern churchgoing motorbiking family man become Rachael Jones? The true story of one person's unique and moving journey told with wit, wisdom and a great cup of coffee.

VENUE 259 JEKYL & HYDE 2PM EVERYDAY FREE UNTIKTICKETED

15th - 27th Aug
excl. 21st

18:30 - 19:30
£6/5

The Melody Blog
a modern musical

FRINGE REVIEW

★★★★★

700

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Monkey Music

From the minute we grabbed a spot on the beanbags that lined the Pleasance igloo, it was straight into the Monkey Music. 'Monkey Music' - a get-together for mums and children, from babies to preschoolers - takes place around Edinburgh weekly, and this session was aimed at preschool children. There was not a lot of monkey, however, though he made a few appearances to bang his drum and shake his maraca. The songs were simple and the instruments noisy; I spotted a few grannies and granddads joining in too! Some of the children began to get a little fed up towards the end, but most were reluctant to give their instruments back. Lots of musical fun for all.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 27 Aug, times vary, £2.00 - £7.00, fpp26. tw rating 3/5 [lc]

COMEDY

Tom Bell Begins

Draw HQ

Taking inspiration from the masked avenger, Tom Bell begins his set with a jaunt through the crowd, balancing like some sort of dark cat-like knight amidst the tottering tabletops. Bedecked in a mesmerising cardigan, this cape-less crusader overwhelms the forces of sub-standard comedy with a barrage of reliable anecdotal japey. It ranges from the through-flowing and uncanny parallelisms between himself and a certain Bruce Wayne, to a surreal musical episode where he stands jiggling while reciting the different species of sustainable fish. Important environmental messages aside, this is a stand-out show from a personable and charming comic. His humour is zany, his guitar-tuning zanier - if you weren't laughing, well, you just didn't get it.

Just The Tonic At The Iron, 4 - 28 Aug (not 16, 21), 3.40pm (4.40pm) £5.00 - £8.50, fpp160. tw rating 3/5 [jlb]

Eric Hutton and Ben Ellwood - The Best Of The Sh*ttest - Free

Eric Hutton and Ben Ellwood

Hailing from sunny Australia, the two stand-ups Eric Hutton and Ben Ellwood entertain the audience with not so sunny stories on subjects ranging from manual labour to a mother who believes that the film 'Valkyrie' is in fact a documentary. 'Best of the Sh*ttest' is, however, a title that fits this well - not because the show isn't particularly funny, but because of the self-deprecating humour from both comedians, with Hutton's laid-back interaction with the audience working particularly well, even though Ellwood's slightly more intellectual approach seems to baffle some audience members. With promises of different material being used over several days, this is one of the better free fringe shows, and is definitely far from being "the sh*ttest".

Laughing Horse @ The Hive, 5 - 28 Aug (not 15, 16, 17, 18), 2.40pm (3.40pm), free, fpp72. tw rating - 3/5 [jlc]

Wedding Band: A Comedy

"Before others buy tickets for 'Wedding Band: A Comedy', may the reviewer who finds reason for staying away speak now or forever lose their press card". It's tempting to say "I do", as we watch this fictional band set up for a gig at a wedding. Despite the potential to make insightful comments on an event many can wistfully relate to, this sadly falls short. However, have faith: with a jazz rendition of Bucks Fizz performed live, the characters come alive, illustrating how well cast this production actually is. So take a step up the theatre aisle for something that may not live up to its potential but is still something new, and is worth it for the jazz alone.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15, 22), 2.45pm (3.45pm) £8.50 - £12.50, fpp164. tw rating 3/5 [jlc]

Ben Brailsford - My Fortnum And Mason Hell

Ben Brailsford

Beneath this disarmingly charming performance is an angry victim of seditious policing. He keeps the politics palpable for the plebs - jokes are sprinkled throughout - but it is less a stand-up act than a soapbox. Particularly relevant after the recent riots, Ben Brailsford's show humanises the criminalised protesters, separating them from the actual criminals, and highlights the increasingly dubious policing in our country. It begins with bassoon trivia, so the audience are, it's fair to say, knocked a little off kilter, but Brailsford quickly brings them onside with a mixture of wit and charm. Swiftly moving into his story of being arrested at Fortnum and Masons and the shocking treatment he receives, the rest of the show is a fascinating hour.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 28 Aug (not 22), 3.25pm (4.15pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp47. tw rating 4/5 [jfb]

Absolute Improv

To be Continued...

I imagine there is edgier, more risqué improv to be found at this year's Fringe, but this offering is one of good clean fun that will draw laughter from teenagers and grandparents alike. With a variety of games to which the audience contribute, the performers free-wheel through songs, rhyming sketches and rapid scene changes. My highlight was the infomercial parody in which the cast borrowed the audience's belongings as props to great comic effect. Taking a little while to get their comedic juices flowing, the troupe could have got off to a more confident start; Lauren Berning, the only female cast member, blazes a vibrantly funny trail and the others relaxed to present a diverting and droll show.

theSpaces on the Mile, 5 - 27 (not 7) Aug, 6.05pm (6.55pm), £9.50 - £7.00, fpp33. tw rating 3/5 [dp]

All The Fun Of The Unfair

Barry/Quaile/Turpin PBH's Free Fringe

This show should not be missed. Humorous compère Chris Quaile kicks off the evening, introducing three comedians who could well go on to be big stars of the comedy circuit. The instantly likeable Jack Barry delivers a



SNAP OF THE DAY: Even Jesus finds this funny, or so Sharron Matthews Superstar assures us. Find out why at the SpaceCabaret. Photo: Paul Collins

strong set of one-liners, general musings and witty anecdotes. Patrick Turpin's awkward persona initially creates an uncomfortable sensation in the room before jumping into a routine that is both surreal and hilarious. And then, to top it off, we see Richard Hanrahan changing the English language, delving into the literary world of over-70s erotica and much more. These guys deliver a variety of subversive comedy and guarantee an evening of voracious laughter. Make sure you see it.

Southsider, 6 - 27 Aug (not 8, 15, 22), 9.30pm (10.30pm), free, fpp37 tw rating 4/5 [mp]

An Evening In With Henry The Hoover And Friends

Steve Aruni And Henry The Groover / PBH's Free Fringe

Some may think that the robotic sounds and censored profanities originating from the modified Henry Hoover, played to the point of aggravation to advertise the show, would discourage people, but surprisingly,

audience numbers are substantial. To begin, the compère instigates a word-association game that, with its forced crude evolution, is better suited to a late-night show. Unfortunately, the show's highlights instead come from guest comedians and, in particular, David Russell, who presents a PowerPoint of funny videos with charm and comedic skill. Although the headline act of the computer-programmed Henry Hoover - which produces contemptuous quips and moves to music - is a humorous idea, the novelty soon wears off.

Ciao Roma, 6 - 27 Aug, 19.05pm (20.05pm), free, fpp74. tw rating 2/5 [kc]

Biscuit And Brawn Make A Meal Of It

Biscuit And Brawn

Hints of great comedy fill this set of surreal sketches. However, it is let down by a loose production, weak editing, and poor performances. A general lack of polish is

cont>>

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

Box Office
0845 508 8515

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www.thespaceuk.com

CHICKENSHED
Theatre Changing Lives

Deeply moving, yet witty in all the right places, this is a production with a purpose.
★★★★★ The Skinny

This is a piece with true integrity from a company with true compassion.
★★★★★ The List

Slender Threads

19 - 28 August 2011 at 5.15pm (not Wednesdays)

ZOO ROXY 2 Roxburgh Place, EH8 9SU
Box Office: 0131 662 6892

'Ridiculously funny. Girls are sizzling'
E. Godowski

'Chuffing Brilliant'
Athena

DANCES FOR WOLVES

4-29 Aug at 9.30pm
C venues vibrant vivacious variety

box office hotline 0845 260 1234 online booking www.CtheFestival.com

content evident from things like indelicat

sketch transitions, and the fact that they're

reading from scripts indiscreetly placed around the stage and, both of which inhibited the flow of the show. Some sketches shouldn't have made it: enacting 'Dragons' Den' with paper plates wasn't funny and broke the sense of anticipation they'd

managed to establish. As their sketches don't rely on the grotesque and their stage persons are forward and likeable, there is a lot of performing stand-up for her fifth time ever, regales us with stories from her life, including dating, boarding school and erotica ("I prefer sandwiches to sex").

Masson spoke of his international roots and attempts to write a hit record. Overall, it's an enjoyable show and particularly impressive considering how new they are to the game.

Jodie Dick

Dicking A Great Big Hole

Jodie Dick

Forbidden in the vault, 8 – 29 Aug (not 14, 15, 21, 22, 28), 1.05pm (2.05pm), £3.50 – £5.00, 50pp, tv rating 3/5 [fb]

When the kinks have been worked out, worth seeing this show, but later in their run she ever, regales us with stories from her life, including dating, boarding school and erotica ("I prefer sandwiches to sex").

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DANCE & PHYSICAL THEATRE

This dual program from a Brazilian company was entirely surreal and really rather brilliant. The first piece, and by far the longest, was performed by a cast of beautiful women as they explored, through contemporary dance, the daily punishments of being young and female in an urban landscape. Were it not for the blurb, I mightn't be so convinced, determining

this as not a word of English was spoken; however neither was much Portuguese, so it can't have mattered greatly. Danced to a backdrop of weird and wonderful projections,

Another Cappadocia

My Voluntary Punishments – Trama Cia, De Dança / Daniel Jaber

From the satirical to the grossly scatological, DC Phil has got it all in hand – and a great bedside manner to boot. The GP-turned-comedian may be most famous for his NHS whistleblowing, but as this show proves, he's about the most interesting objects removed from patients' bottoms would, in any other hands, border on the unlikable; DC Phil seriously makes it hilarious, but throws in a serious message without losing the interest of the audience – an impressive feat. It's a show at least as interesting as it is funny, full of facts both medical and political, and appointments now.

the space @ Symposium Hall, 8 – 27 Aug (not 14, 17, 21, 22, 29 Aug), £7.00 – £10.00, fpp69 tv rating 4/5 [eb]

Upon arriving at this gig, I wondered whether the stand-up acts would indeed be giants. I also wondered whether they would make me laugh. It turns out that all three comedians in this show are both very tall and very funny.

Lea Kearse (a likeable everyperson) opens, followed by Lindsay Sharnan (a female Michael McIntyre on a sugar-overdose).

Darren Walsh finishes with deliciously weird wordplay and sound effects, where a nightmarish vision of Bruce Forsyth is a particular highlight. The whole show is delivered with such energy and aplomb that the audience is left powerless to resist. This could be one of the most enjoyable shows of the Free Fringe – and it beats a lot of paid gigs too.

Fingers Piano Bar, 6 – 27 Aug (not 8, 15, 22), 7.50pm (8.50pm), free, fpp83, tv rating 4/5 [ek]

Dr Phil's Rude Health Show

Phil Hammond

From the satirical to the grossly scatological, DC Phil has got it all in hand – and a great bedside manner to boot. The GP-turned-comedian may be most famous for his NHS whistleblowing, but as this show proves, he's about the most interesting objects removed from patients' bottoms would, in any other hands, border on the unlikable; DC Phil seriously makes it hilarious, but throws in a serious message without losing the interest of the audience – an impressive feat. It's a show at least as interesting as it is funny, full of facts both medical and political, and appointments now.

well worth an hour of your time. Make an appointment now.

the space @ Symposium Hall, 8 – 27 Aug (not 14, 17, 21, 22, 29 Aug), £7.00 – £10.00, fpp69 tv rating 4/5 [eb]

Giants of Comedy

Darren Walsh, Leo Kearse, Lindsay Sharnan / FBH's Free Fringe

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Fingers Piano Bar, 6 – 27 Aug (not 8, 15, 22), 7.50pm (8.50pm), free, fpp83, tv rating 4/5 [ek]

The Pajama Men: In The Middle

Assembly By Arrangement With CAA

Aliensi Time travel Knife fights! The South American created give-it-to-me bird! All of these and more are created to by two men in their pyjamas, using nothing more than two chairs and the power of their performances. It's extremely impressive and also absolutely hilarious. The sides of my face hurt from laughing as The Pajama Men flew through an hour of brilliantly written, high-energy sketches. They have a delightful sense for the absurd and are accomplished physical comedians; a section where they portray marionettes is an absolute triumph in both conception and execution. The quality never once drops, and the sold-out crowd were you can. They'll be selling fast.

You can. They'll be selling fast.

Assembly Hall, 4 – 29 Aug (not 15), 9.00pm (10.00pm), £12.00 – £14.00, fpp130, tv rating 5/5 [lm]

Those Two

Eff Lyons & Masud Mills

As I stepped into this small Free Fringe venue, I was impressed with how big the audience was. Perhaps it had something to do with the topical rail. As I suspect I'm not the only person unfamiliar with these two, I was not entirely sure what found myself laughing, quite soon and quite to expect. I'm pleased to say, however, I

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and still is - subject to shifting perceptions.

This exhibition explores the evolution of imagery devoted to the monarch since her coronation, and our changing patterns of reverence. With a diverse mix of formal portraits, official photographs, media images and contemporary depictions, it offers an unbiased insight into the development of her representation, and with it a glimpse of Avian, whose mission is to save the world from loneliness. His plan is to build a rocket, fly into outer space and find another planet to bring back to keep the earth company.

The show is so fragile it's in constant danger of falling apart, but the playfulness of the writing and the lightness of Stuart's performance hold it together. Full of wit and charm, this is low-fi DIV storytelling theatre at its very best.

Underbellly, 4 – 28 Aug (not 15), 2.55pm (3.55pm), Underbellly, 4 – 28 Aug (not 15), 2.55pm (3.55pm), £8.00 – £10.00, fpp312 tv rating 5/5 [mc]

Amnesiac vampires admittedly were not a premise that immediately thrilled me, but this grungy, slick, apocalyptically-tinged performance was certainly gripping. At its worst, it put me in mind of Twilight porn with depth, as an olive-skinned Edward Cullen figure brooded across the stage, playing the troubled

romantic out for impassioned revenge. The styling was crisp if predictable, and the densely fabricated plot was weighed down by too much circumstantial politics.

They create a richly detailed, cinematic, adrenaline-fuelled world, but it was a performance of overly ambitious scope, and the play a raw landscape of human emotions where the desire to dominate their characters' pasts - disappearing into others reigns. The performers embody

betrayals, shaken morals, lusts, lost loves - and Robin Thompson's manipulative Hedda is a fearsome centre; she builds up then cruelly dismantles those around her, turning against herself in the process. In the capable hands of Pallindrome Theatre, Ibsen's extraordinary picture of personal relationships rings cathartic and true.

Hill Street Theatre, 5 – 29 Aug (not 10, 17, 24), 2.15pm (3.45pm), £6.00 – £8.00, fpp270, tv rating 4/5 [dp]

From the satirical to the grossly scatological, DC Phil has got it all in hand – and a great bedside manner to boot. The GP-turned-comedian may be most famous for his NHS whistleblowing, but as this show proves, he's about the most interesting objects removed from patients' bottoms would, in any other hands, border on the unlikable; DC Phil seriously makes it hilarious, but throws in a serious message without losing the interest of the audience – an impressive feat. It's a show at least as interesting as it is funny, full of facts both medical and political, and appointments now.

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Assembly Hall, 4 – 29 Aug (not 15), 9.00pm (10.00pm), £12.00 – £14.00, fpp130, tv rating 5/5 [lm]

Assembly By Arrangement With CAA

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Aliensi Time travel Knife fights! The South American created give-it-to-me bird! All of these and more are created to by two men in their pyjamas, using nothing more than two chairs and the power of their performances. It's extremely impressive and also absolutely hilarious. The sides of my face hurt from laughing as The Pajama Men flew through an hour of brilliantly written, high-energy sketches. They have a delightful sense for the absurd and are accomplished physical comedians; a section where they portray marionettes is an absolute triumph in both conception and execution. The quality never once drops, and the sold-out crowd were you can. They'll be selling fast.

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