

ThreeWeeks IN EDINBURGH

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Jason John Whitehead
letters from mindy

★★★★★
The Scotsman

★★★★★
Toronto Sun

★★★★★
Edinburgh Evening News

★★★★★
Metro

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

PAUL McCAFFREY
SAYING SOMETHING STUPID

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

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, JEKYLL & HYDE, 2PM EVERYDAY, FREE UNTIKTICKETED

15th - 27th Aug
excl. 21st | 18:30 - 19:30
£6/5

The Melody Blog
a modern musical

★★★★★
FRINGE REVIEW

ZOO

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."

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CHICKENSHED
Theatre Changing Lives

Slender Threads

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

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

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

