

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 'the bested children' are pretty much a direct route to a better life for everyone.

A genuine gift for saying the most outrageous things in the most disarmingly charming fashion.

★★★★★
★★★★★
★★★★★

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SAYING SOMETHING STUPID

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The Melody Blog
a modern musical

★★★★★
FRINGE REVIEW

ZOO ROXY

CHILDREN'S

Comedy Club 4 Kids

Brett Vincent for Get Comedy

Lots of poos, wees and bums – nothing rude, then. A cuddly compère chats happily to the children about various exploits: hunting the crown jewels, being undercover and playing football with oranges. There are different acts for every show, and at this one we were offered the beat-boxing delights of Shlomo - who got the kids quacking and squeaking on stage - and Fringe favourites Big Howard and Little Howard, a hilarious comedy duo, part man part animated 6-year-old. The format is fast, fun and the kids seem to love having their own chance at the adult version. Definitely one for the diary – not least as future acts include the likes of Stephen K Amos and Rich Hall - however, though it's a definite hit with older children, it may not be so entertaining for the under 6s.

The Bongo Club, 3 - 28 Aug, 5.30pm (6.30pm), £6.00 - £10.00, fpp20 tw rating [5/5] [pr]

COMEDY

Alive and Breathing... Almost

Lynn Ruth Miller

It's not every 78 year old woman that could stand up for an hour, never mind do stand-up. However, seeing self-professed "78 year old cougar" Lynn Ruth Miller perform her show is an experience I'm recommending to all Fringe-goers looking for something a little different. This is a show about growing old disgracefully, and it comes with a strong-language warning. Miller talks about stubbornly refusing assisted living and the perils of dating for the elderly – "These days, I go to Hooters for the memories. But worse, my dates go for the food." I laughed a lot and was thoroughly entertained by her humour, her attitude, her wickedly clever punchlines and her obvious skill as a comedian.

Sweet Grassmarket, 6 - 28 Aug, 10.00pm (10.50pm), £5.00 - £7.00, fpp37. tw rating 4/5 [ek]

Benjamin Crellin: Stands To Reason

Benjamin Crellin's one-hour stand-up show is a shotgun blast through a world full of ignorance. Finally, I thought, a comedian who addresses what needs to be said: namely the irony and perversity of our lives in the first world. He's not here to talk to the drunks; he is here to tear through your cerebrum and expose the flaws. Covering the 'War on Terror', the possibility of paedophile suicide-bombers and disabled commandos, Benjamin Crellin is a Frankie Boyle-style comedian with a satirical brain and black humour; but crucially, in a world full of Jack Whitehalls, he is one of few comedians that has something to say. Go see him or I'll hurt you. (Disclaimer: not really.)

Bar 50, 6 - 27 Aug (Not 11, 18, 25), 8.20pm(9.20pm), free, fpp n/a tw rating 5/5 [cd]

The Three Englishmen: Optimists

Irreverent, charismatic, and beautifully delivered, these musical comedy sketches

are reminiscent of an updated Monty Python. I would query a 12+ rating on a show with quite so much swearing, but your teenagers will definitely find this show hilarious. Exploring the strange quirks of British culture in their own lyrical and unexpected way, Ben Cottam, Nick Hall, Jack Hartnell and Tom Hensby extort many belly-laughs and guffaws from an audience of all ages. In fact, they are so funny that at times they couldn't resist laughing at their own jokes; luckily they had the personality to pull this off and it added to the humour. From witty songs to all-out physical comedy, there's definitely something for everyone here.

Just The Tonic at the Caves, 4 - 28 Aug (not 17), 4.00pm (5.00pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp158. tw rating 4/5 [ld]

Tim Key - Masterslut

As a man in a suit submerges himself in a bath fully clothed, you may wonder whether you've come to the right show and have instead accidentally walked in on a piece of experimental theatre. That, however, is the most refreshing thing about Tim Key; whilst always familiar and likeable, he is fantastically subversive and at times just plain eccentric. He reads out his infamous poems that begin with lines such as, "There was a sparrow obsessed with Emma Bunton" and only go further down the rabbit-hole of odd as they progress. There is no doubt that Key is on the up, so go and see him while he's still performing at smaller venues.

Pleasance Dome, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15), 9.45pm (10.40pm), £11.00 - £14.00, fpp159. tw rating 5/5 [jc]

AAA Stand-Up

Bound And Gagged Comedy

With three blokes taking turns on stage to make jokes about masturbation, shit and their girlfriends, 'AAA Stand-Up' is not the kind of show you'd visit with your mother. Flaws include unsophisticated material (er, see above) and a slightly pub comedy-ish delivery, but this is easily forgiven in light of the act's feel-good nature. It is plain to see that the trio are just good mates with good banter and a need to make people laugh. It's eye-wateringly crude and genuinely funny so if you're a bit of a lad – or just have the same sense of humour as my fifteen-year-old brother - then this is the show for you. Grab a pint and get down there!

Pleasance Courtyard, 6 - 29 Aug, 7.15pm (8.15pm), £7.50 - £10.00, fpp 32. tw rating 3/5 [emw]

Humphrey Ker Is Dymock Watson: Nazi Smasher!

Feature Spot Productions

The Penny Dreadfuls' Humphrey Ker must be having the most fun on the Fringe this year. His breathtakingly inventive and tremendously quotable one-man spy fiction spoof was a rollicking, cinematic masterpiece, which would thoroughly deserve the coveted Best Newcomer trophy at the end of August. Bursting with dozens of hilarious similes, wonderfully jingoistic linguistic flourishes, and ingenious



SNAP OF THE DAY: How about 'Twelfth Night' from this guy's perspective? Tim Crouch's 'I, Malvolio' at the Traverse Theatre. Photo: Mark Conway

wartime jokes that only a former History undergraduate could have written, this was a multi-layered spectacle that I would have paid to watch several evenings in succession. Not only because it was almost sinfully entertaining, but also because the packed audience's ecstatic laughter, which arrived every fifteen seconds without failure, must have drowned out countless sophisticated subtleties in the performance. Verdict – five swastikas.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 17), 7.15pm (8.10pm), £10.00 - £12.50, fpp89. tw rating: 5/5 [jf]

Al Murray's Compete For The Meat

Avalon Promotions

Al Murray has a few die-hard regulars in his audience, but even they are completely bemused by the opening video showing his reaction to the London riots. The next hour and a half is spent between general knowledge, half-baked singalongs and

Murray shouting "It's Chriiistmaaaaas!" in order to excuse anything. The Pub Landlord humour of systematically insulting his audience is still a crowd-pleaser, but the pub-quiz format and limited seating means not all of us are really involved, so it's worth getting in early if you do want to compete for the meat. Maybe the late-night show will be merrier, but in the middle of the day in rainy August, Christmas cheer is really lacking.

Assembly George Square, 12 - 27 Aug, 4.00pm (5.30pm), £15.00, fpp37. tw rating 2/5 [ja]

Alistair Green: Outpatient

Alistair Green

This show is a hard sell but an excellent hour of comedy. In an honest account of what followed his diagnosis of HSP - a condition in which the body begins to attack its own organs - Green threads humour into a very serious subject. None of it feels like a throwaway gag; at its core is a story of an aggressive illness, yet Green crafts it into a

cont>>

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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)

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KATE DAISY GRANT with NICK PYNN

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cont>> hilarious hour. Few comedians at this year’s Fringe deal with a single topic throughout so competently; his audience is engaged and on his side throughout. This unconventional comedic set-up deserves to be seen, and will strike chords with a lot of people who have had, or know people with, serious illnesses.

Just The Tonic The Caves, 4 – 28 Aug (not 10, 17, 23), 4.35pm (5.35pm), £7.00 - £8.00, fpp37. tw rating 4/5 [fb]

Benny Boot: Set Up, Punchline... Pause For Laughter

Pleasance

Forgive me for putting the boot in, but this alleged stand-up comedian was truly soul-destroying. Exhibiting an embarrassing lack of professionalism that wouldn’t even be acceptable in a preview performance, Benny guffawed at his own weakly structured jokes, explained punchlines when they fell flatter than steamrollered pancakes, and appeared dumbstruck when his amateurish material was met with a stonier-faced reception than an Ancient Greek temple. About forty-minutes into an advertised hour-long set, after exhausting all of his exhausting one-liners, he glanced at his watch, asked how much longer he had left to perform, and then suggested recapping. The half-full audience politely declined. Unfortunately, for a show with such a presumptuous title, the pauses allocated for laughter were rarely filled.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 – 29 Aug (not 15), 9.45pm (10.45pm), £7.00 - £9.50, fpp47 tw rating: 1/5 [jf]

Can You Dig It?

Jo Stephenson And Dan Woods

Tucked away in the Botanic Gardens is this little gem of a show. Jo Stephenson and Dan Woods take us through the highs and lows of gardening, growing your own, and tending an allotment. Offering a fine selection of comedy songs, Jo and Dan demonstrate that they are clearly brilliant musicians and inspired wordsmiths. The silliness of what they sing about belies a real sophistication and wit in the lyrics, and the show is like a fantastic collision of Tom Lehrer, ‘Flight Of The Conchords’ and allotment gardening. From ballads about Alan Titchmarsh to techno songs about slugs, they barely put a foot wrong. The humour is gentle, at times a bit reminiscent of music hall, but is never less than laugh-out-loud funny.

Royal Botanic Garden, 5 – 29 Aug (not 9,16,23), 4.00pm (4.50pm), £12.00, fpp53. tw rating 4/5 [mc]

Carey Marx: Laziness And Stuff

Lee Martin For Gag Reflex Management

Measuring his set perfectly from start to finish, with this finely tuned and well-polished routine Carey Marx manages to capture the audience in the palm of his hand. He nimbly drifts from standard chat about sex and relationships into examining social relationships, the nuances of marriages, and before long, a questioning of feminism; it’s a neat package, as with this kind of winsome persona (like a friendlier Doug Stanhope), he nonetheless manages to explore without preaching or patronising. Though his pace is at times overplayed, it’s a charming and gentle performance which is propped up by its own craft. Seldom do Fringe audiences see such a finished routine, and with it, Marx creates an enticing show.

Gilded Balloon Tervot, 3 – 28 Aug (not 15), 10.15pm (11.15pm), £7.00 - £9.50, fpp53. tw rating 4/5 [aj]

Catriona Knox: Packed Lunch

Bookended by the appearance of a mad Greek restaurateur, this hour of character comedy is delightful and charming. Of course, some characters are more successful than others, and there’s nothing revolutionary in the choice of targets – group therapy, schoolboy wannabe pop-stars, and ageing actresses – but the take on them is fresh and quirky; a particular delight is an uncannily accurate impression of Sarah Ferguson. Despite the fact that she’s playing what are essentially caricatures, Knox’s acting is detailed and subtle, and the writing, for the most part, is very strong. However, a few of the characters could have done with a bit of editing, and there could have been a couple more gags. That said, this show is still a great lunchtime treat.

Udderbelly’s Pasture, 3 – 29 Aug (not 15), 1.35pm (2.35pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp55. tw rating 3/5 [mc]

Dan Antopolski, Tom Craine & Nat Luurtsema: Jigsaw

Sketch comedians usually rely on props and

costumes to pull together short stints of comedic brilliance; that said, these three are established stand-ups, so you might have expected a minimalist approach: these three didn’t need much more than two stools, a stocking and some lentils to create a great balance between a stand-up show and a sketch set. Insanely witty one-liners were inserted between the bigger skits, which included spoofs of ‘Dragons’ Den’, pregnancy, and ‘The Godfather’, making this quite a jigsaw-puzzle of humour. They return to some of their jokes during the hour, but the lack of an overall theme is quite refreshing. If you’ve been here for a while and you’re tired of watching people on stage try too hard, check out this show: these guys are just naturally funny.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 16), 5.45pm - 6.45pm, £7.00 - £9.50, fpp98. tw rating 4/5 [tw]

WitTank

WitTank have been entertaining audiences at the Fringe since 2006, and yet again this young trio have produced a revue overflowing with originality, fun and, of course, wit. With recurring characters that are utilised to the perfect degree without becoming repetitious, and sketches that excel without cheap crudity, this show demonstrates why the critically acclaimed WitTank team fully deserve their place as an established and popular revue group each year at the Fringe. With Naz Osmanoglu’s wonderfully dark and sinister characters, Mark Cooper Jones’ charming physical comedy and Kieran Boyd’s glorious feminine innocence, this trio complement each other superbly and have an irrepressibly good time on stage, letting the audience in on their world of inventive, energetic creativity.

Just The Tonic at the Caves, 4 - 28 Aug (not 17), 6.15pm (7.15pm), £7.50 - £8.50, fpp165. tw rating 4/5 [kc]

Fred Cooke: Comfort In Chaos

Fred Cooke

Irish writer, director, performer, stand-up (and face of the incredibly popular(?) Spar ads), Fred Cooke comes to Edinburgh for the first time ever with ‘Comfort in Chaos’. His press release promises big things and a song and dance, but it remains to be seen whether Cooke can cook up a storm for the fiercest diners in comedy. The show starts and ends on a crisp musical high, but is regrettfully saggy in the middle, and while the execution of his anecdotes are timed perfectly, the content fell a bit flat. If Fred’s gags were as funny as his Kenneth Williams-esque facial expressions, delightfully camp dancing and enjoyably odd improv, then the show could have been a sweeter afternoon delight.

Gilded Balloon Tervot, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15th), 1.15pm (2.15pm), £6.50 - £8.50, fpp78. tw rating 3/5 [lc]

EVENTS

Edinburgh Book Fringe

The unassuming Word Power bookshop on West Nicolson Street is home this month to many famous authors discussing and reading from their works. In today’s cast the room is full to hear Shlomo Sand talking about his new book. Sand is famed for his previous work ‘The Invention of the Jewish People’ which caused widespread controversy. Today, however, despite the author’s proclamation that he speaks little English, he captivates the room with his discussion of Jewish and Israeli identity. The shop itself offers an intimate but not limiting space with which to interact with widely-reputed authors. Somewhat of a hidden treasure of the book festival, anyone with a keen interest in literature should be sure to check the programme.

Word Power Books, 18 - 25 Aug, free, fpp n/a. tw rating 5/5 [ec]

MUSIC

Beethoven For Breakfast

ROSL Arts

The ROSL has a great history of championing young musicians the world over, bringing them to the rapt ears of their members, and then serving a spot of tea. The first performance in the series featured powerful music played with faultless ease, and which, in the absence of a conductor, let us feel connected both to the musicians themselves and to the music. Though dressed well, we’re very aware of being in a hotel suite rather than a concert hall, since

a few initial shuffles stunted the beginning. Nevertheless, the ROSL’s concerts throughout the day will not fail to impress, and with only limited tickets available, it’s worth getting in fast before the tea’s all gone.

Royal Over-Seas League – Overseas House, 16, 18, 23, 25 Aug, 9.30am (10.30am), £10.00 - £12.00, fpp196. tw rating 4/5 [ja]

Brahms At Teatime

ROSL Arts

We all know what the average male opera singer sounds like but Abraham Singer's voice is far beyond average. Performing some of the finest work by Brahms and Robert Schumann, Singer (oh, the irony) filled the small hotel suite with his booming voice – so much so that it was a wonder why the floor wasn’t vibrating. Clarinettist Sarah Beaty performed with a great spirit and presence, almost dancing around the small stage with her instrument, which was lovely to watch. Cellist Yelian He played with equal passion and conviction. Pianists Timothy End and Martin Cousin took turns at the keys, giving both very impressive performances whether as accompaniment or solo. The German composers would be very proud.

Royal Over-Seas League, 16, 18, 23, 25 Aug, 4.00pm (5.00pm), £10.00 - £12.00, fpp197. tw rating 4/5 [ng]

MUSICALS

The Deacon

Written by Peter D Dobinson, this original musical breathes new life into the story of Deacon Brodie, Edinburgh’s infamous swindler. The production uses the ‘plot within a plot’ technique, as Brodie’s life is retold by an animated tavern landlord who selects his friends and customers to take up the parts of the characters involved in the tale. This is performed with gusto by an accomplished cast, and a special mention should go to Kirsty Anderson, who played the enamoured barmaid Ailsa with charm, and sang to perfection. The original score was delightful, if a little forgettable, and there were often lulls in moments of long dialogue. However, for a truly Scottish musical, look no further than ‘The Deacon’.

Stockbridge Parish Church, Aug 17 – 27 (not 21,22,23), 7.45pm (9.45pm), £7.00 - £10.00, fpp227. tw rating 3/5 [st]

THEATRE

Singing “I’m No A Billy, He’s A Tim”

Goldfish Theatre Company Limited/The Stand Comedy Club

This is a play about football. It’s also a comedy with a powerful message. Billy and Tim are two football fans locked in a police cell together. The trouble is, one supports Celtic, while the other is a Rangers man. The scene is set for a bitter feud, and it’s through these trivial football rivalries that the eternal problems of hatred and sectarianism are explored. The jokes flow freely, although some knowledge of football culture is essential to decipher the humour, and those who are not lovers of the beautiful game may find the premise off-putting. Nonetheless, the use of footie to expose the folly of bigotry admirably broadens this comedy to involve new audiences.

The Stand Comedy Club III & IV, 3 – 28 Aug (not 15), 12.55pm (2.35pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp298. tw rating 3/5 [al]

The Last Days Of Gilda

Alter Theatre Company, Gael Le Cornec / Performer

In the setting Brazilian favelas, Gilda tells an enraptured audience of the hardships in her life: how the local women hate her for her relationships with their menfolk and of how she dreams of being “a movie star in a long red dress”. Full of warm humour, this is a thoroughly engaging one-woman show. French-Brazilian actress Gael Le Cornec gives an excellent performance: her Gilda easily rivals Rita Hayworth’s in terms of sexiness and sultriness. It’s very cleverly staged as well, with the towels that adorn Gilda’s home being used to represent all manner of things, from live chickens to cake mix, made possible again by Le Cornec’s performance. A very accomplished piece of theatre.

New Town Theatre, 4 - 28 Aug (not 9, 16, 23), 2.50pm (3.50pm), £8.00 - £11.00, fpp274. tw rating 4/5 [im]

Spent

Why Not Theatre / TheatreRUN / Theatre Smith-Gilmour

Employing bizarre clowning and acerbic satire, the well-oiled, madcap double-act Ravi Jain and Adam Paolozza imbue the financial crisis we all know and hate with a sense of the absurd. They aim to exchange anger at those responsible with laughter, and they succeed, having us chuckling in no time. The vigorous show is built around the fortunes of two executives seen in penniless despair and then, in a memorable scene, wallowing in the promise of wealth and aroused by the dollar bill. The Media doesn’t escape ridicule: news reporters from every continent are skilfully parodied to hilarious effect. ‘Spent’ may benefit from being condensed, but its beautifully judged ending and unflinching look at the attraction of cash are ample repayment.

Pleasance Dome, 3 - 29 Aug (not 17, 23), 2.55pm (4.00pm), £7.50 - £9.50, fpp299. tw rating 4/5 [dp]

To Have And To Hold

Ribbon

Lucy is a bored bridesmaid at her best friend’s wedding. Tristan is a good-looking graphic designer with a guilty conscience. You guessed it: the two meet and instantly fall in love. However, ‘To Have And To Hold’ is no straight forward rom-com – the lead couple’s attempts at getting together are constantly thwarted at every possible romantic moment by an assortment of dead, old, racist, suicidal and mysterious wedding guests. Oh, and a goat. Marital melodrama at its best, ‘To Have And To Hold’ is full of snappy one-liners, perfect comic timing and makes do without walking the same clichéd wedding jokes down the aisle. An hour of unbridled hilarity that will have you in tears of laughter and frustration.

Paradise In Augustine’s, 6 - 29 Aug (not 15, 22), times vary, £5.00 - £7.00, fpp304. tw rating 4/5 [emw]

When Abel Met Cain

Raphael Rodan And Anastasis Sarakatsanos

Where did the time go? The intense spell - cast by a few songs, melodies and stories - is broken too soon. This production weaves a dense web, with a guitar, drums and a kanun (a type of zither), along with tales from Galilee, legends of the Old Testament and from a little island in the sea. Raphael Rodan is the visionary storyteller who lets the audience see his little village in the mountains; lets them feel the wind in his hair and the spreading view before his eyes. He takes them right into battle; he slays Abel before their eyes. Anastasis Sarakatsanos adds the mystic sounds of his oriental instrument. The two halves form a complete and fulfilling whole.

Paradise In The Vault, 7 - 28 Aug (not 15, 22), 7.35pm (8.35pm), £3.50 - £5.00, fpp310. tw rating 4/5 [vk]

One Thousand Paper Cranes

Lu Kemp

Based on a true story, ‘One Thousand Paper Cranes’ uncovers the meaning of true friendship. Suffering from radiation sickness - a lingering repercussion of the Hiroshima bombings - 12 year old Sadako Sasaki is hospitalised. Her best friend and trainer Chiziko, helps lift her spirits by making it a rule to visit at her ward every day and, ultimately, persuading her to make one thousand paper cranes in the belief that it will save her life. Benefiting from snippets of humour weaved into the moving narrative, the performers unveil the charm contained within childhood innocence. Moreover, the colourful display of literally hundreds of paper cranes makes the show even more magical, and adds to the wholly splendid performance.

Assembly George Square, 4 - 27 Aug (not 9, 16, 23), 1.10pm (2.05pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp286. tw 4/5 [ma]

Rose (Starring Keira And Art Malik)

Dirty Boots, MLJ And SEaRED In Association With Pleasance

‘Rose’ is a soft, sublime portrait of the conflict between a person’s home and their cultural roots. Rose is English because she was born in England, but her father - for all of his efforts - is not. Presented in the set of a hospital ward where Arthur spends his last days, the play skilfully transports back and forth between past and present, dealing with some of the key points in Rose’s life and how she begins to learn the truth about her father, her mother and her

heritage. The two stars of the show are father and daughter in real life, which adds to the piece’s potency; overall, a moving, meandering piece that strikes the perfect balance between intensity and charm.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 16), 5.25pm (6.35pm), £12.50 - £14.50, fpp294. tw rating 5/5 [pr]

Snap.Catch.Slam

Fraser Cannon And Aslan Productions

Life is complex. Life is fragile. One moment can change everything. That’s the essence of ‘Snap.Catch.Slam’ – succinctly titled, yet richly developed. The cast of five tell a story, each one circling around one of the verbs in the title, each shocking and utterly compelling, so that even with the minimalist set, one becomes immersed in the world of the storyteller. This is due to the fantastic writing, which builds to a point of pure human emotion in each story: several times I found myself on the edge of my seat as the events of each tale unfolded before my eyes. I only wish the title had more verbs so that I could have watched it for longer.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 28 Aug (not 23), 1.40pm (2.40pm), £8.50 - £10.50, fpp298. tw rating 5/5 [ljc]

And The Birds Fell From The Sky

ll Pixel Rosso

Sensory deprivation is one thing, but this is something else entirely. Not stripped but replaced, our senses are taken on a terrifying journey to the world of the Faruq, a race who speak an impenetrable language and look oddly like circus clowns. This is art to question the world, to be seen, heard, felt, smelt, and acted upon. What starts as a mere vision turns into a story which has us responding to its every whim. Only two visitors can experience ‘And the Birds Fell from the Sky’ at once, and I recommend taking a friend, since this is the only way you will find someone who understands its enormity and dreamlike perfection. It is not for the faint-hearted.

C eca, 14 - 29 Aug, times vary, £7.50 - £10.50, fpp237. tw rating 5/5 [ja]

Around The World In 80 Quid

Aindrias De Staic

Opening with a reel on his fiddle, Aindrias jumps into the show full of energy and charm. His story takes him from Galway round the world busking and boozing. His audience is enraptured by the story alone, but the music is not simply an interlude; instead, the music changes in style to match the places he goes to: Irish, Romany, and more. Behind the laughs and music is the story of a man deep in the grip of alcoholism and drug abuse, and his fight against them. Playing the audience, he can draw responses – claps to the beat, stamping of feet, even people dancing in the aisles - to his energetic Romany fiddle music. An excellent evening.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15, 16, 17, 22), 10.45pm (11.50pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp239. tw rating 4/5 [fb]

One Night Stan

Fitzalan Productions In Association With Fringe Management

I can’t lie: I’ve never taken a major interest in the lives and works of Laurel and Hardy. I’ve never cared, and I didn’t think that an hour-long monologue delivered through the character of the former alone (that is, Stan Laurel) would spark any such interest. Well, I was wrong. With the help of some excellent technical direction, Miles Gallant’s sensitive control of dialogue and wonderfully natural stage-presence draws the audience seamlessly into a lonely dressing-room in 1954, and, consequently, through the moving memories of Stan – his career, his father, and his partner in comedy crime, Hardy. This is a lovely, entertaining slice of biographical theatre, beautifully staged for the interested and ignorant alike.

Assembly George Square, 3 - 29 Aug, 3.45pm (4.45pm), £9.00 - £12.00, fpp286. tw rating 4/5 [kl]



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