

# ThreeWeeks EDINBURGH



## Cabaret

### Lady Carol Must Die

**Lady Carol/Assembly Rooms**  
A raw but sensuous voice pours from Lady Carol as she uses music and laughter to explore and share her own life experiences. She takes blues back to its empathic roots, as they pervade her touching and very human view of difficult family relationships. Emotion and song strengthen and deepen each other, whilst Lady Carol's delivery is sweet yet wry, only occasionally misjudging the delicate balance between comical tone and serious subject matter. As she describes her entry into the harsh world of performance, she begins to remove her glamorous accessories until she looks more like the little girl playing in the photo sideshow behind her. A powerful, personal and exposing show, which was an utter privilege to watch.

The Assembly Rooms, 2-26 Aug (not 13), times vary.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Jessamine McHugh]

### The Jewbadour

**Daniel Cainer**  
Having performed 'The Jewish Chronicles' at various Fringes past, 'The Jewbadour' is Cainer's new exploration of his Jewish heritage through the medium of witty and cleverly crafted songs. Regaling us with tales of a drug-dealing rabbi, his grandparents' disgruntlement at Jewish heaven and a fifteen minute ode to his off-the-rails Aunt Naomi, Daniel Cainer offers a twist at every corner on this walk down memory lane. He is a talented musician adept at both piano and banjo, and the various styles of music reflect the tone of each story in this musical 'Who Do You Think You Are?'. The whole show oozes charm, and you'll spend a pleasant hour being lost in Cainer's family history. You might even pick up some Yiddish. Oy vey!  
Mood Nightclub, 4-25 August, 4.15pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Anna McDonald]

## COMEDY

### Men Of Character

**Confused Moose/Free Festival**  
Strong performances from Matt Payton and Michael Blomquist were let down by the uneven script of this character-led sketch show. The admirable versatility displayed during the first few scenes, which saw both men flit quickly between several characters, was demonstrated less and less as the sketches become longer. Protracted speeches such as a diatribe from a school board candidate and characters like blind-dater Jack tarnished other brighter moments such the highly entertaining skit featuring erudite, plotting primary pupils, and indeed, with further development, a whole show could be made from the various wedding speeches. Although they seemed to enjoy their own material, these talented performers



**SNAP OF THE DAY: Taking a rest from all the Fringe chaos? Not at all, it's the cast of 'Mies Julie', Yael Farber's new adaptation of Strindberg's classic 'Miss Julie' performing at Assembly Hall. Photo: Ting Guo**

deserve more than the faint chuckles their characters raise.

Laughing Horse @ Jekyll & Hyde, 3-26 Aug, 3.05pm.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Sarah Macartney]

### Mitch Benn - Reduced Circumstances

**Mitch Benn/The Stand Comedy Club**  
Many fringe-goers will be familiar with Mitch Benn's formula for stand up comedy, and plenty of performers will be combining music and comedy at this year's festival; few will be as likeable, talented and entertaining as Benn, however. The show title 'Reduced Circumstances' reflects his recent drop in weight (he's lost eleven stone in twelve months) as well as the country's recent financial losses. His songs are the highlight, a combination of funny, clever and catchy ('Bouncy Druids' in particular is sure to become a YouTube hit) though while his musical stylings stand out, his autobiographical routines are also not to be missed. He could be excused for coming over as preachy regarding his recent lifestyle change, but his 'reduced circumstances' are not reflected in his comic skills, and he keeps things fun. Well worth watching.

The Stand Comedy Club III & IV, August 4-26 (not 8, 13) 3.00pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [David O'Connor]

### Nick Page: My Glorious Hypothetical Life As a Eunuch

**Nick Page**  
Nick Page, of daytime TV fame, claims that testosterone scuppered his chances of success at the tender age of 13. His first ever Fringe show combines tales of 'Escape to the Country' with the humour of an uncomfortable best man's speech, as he mixes memories of his career as a BBC estate agent with stories of heavy drinking and divorce. Much of his observational comedy relies heavily on gender stereotypes and an arrogant persona, but despite the slightly hackneyed nature of the material, Page's set is technically well-crafted and the act is saved by an engaging passage on his clash with prison law, in which he exposes the intricacies and hypocrisies of the penal system with a series of witty, if smug, anecdotes.

The Shack Comedy Club and Nightclub, 3-25 Aug (not 13), 3.30pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Eve Lacey]

### No Pants Thursday: T'il Death Do Us Party

**No Pants Thursday**, so called because they have substituted their trousers for comedy [sic] underpants, provide an hour of funny and imaginative material. The sketches manage to keep the overall story in motion whilst also working very well as individual pieces, making for an engaging experience. Although the writing is strong, the performance does have the

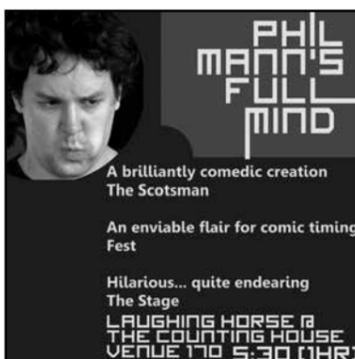
vibe of a few sixth-formers messing about in the common room (cf. trouserlessness), so perhaps best avoided if you're easily irritated. If you have thicker skin or are simply a big fan of skinny legs and silly voices, then this is certainly worth taking the time to see, with a particular highlight being the parody of 1990s US sitcoms 'Take My Wife'.

Just The Tonic, 3-26 Aug (not 14), 9.00pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Nicholas Jones]

### Parris And Dowler Know What They're Doing

The show starts with a song repeating the lines "Paris and Dowler know what they're doing" to the same four notes, and this kind of demonstrates how the show will go: Paris and Dowler are an impressionist and a musical comedian respectively, with the show divided between them, and while the impressions are good, they do get rather tiresome because of a build up of repetition, plus the songs are hit and miss. The saving grace is when the two get together, because there's a good chemistry between them; they work well, bouncing off one another to produce a decent act. Overall it's a good performance, but one which would benefit from less repetition, and more interaction between the two acts.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, 4-26 Aug, 3.10pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Miranda Cannibal]



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## Phil Walker: Is This It?

### Phil Walker/Laughing Horse Free Festival

Phil Walker radiates an infectious, cheeky energy. A slightly rowdy pub crowd is not an easy audience at the best of times, but Phil gives better than he gets, and all with an affable grin somewhere between the winking countenance of Al Murray and the chirpy expression of Jason Manford. He’s as comfortable with stand-up as he is with audience interaction, employing Usain-quick wit, and he keeps running jokes alive with perfect timing. The material veers often into overworked territory, but he always manages a new and inventive spin, if occasionally missing the mark with his more inappropriate jokes. Phil Walker is definitely ready to give more experienced comedians a run for their money, as long as he keeps that boyish charm.

Laughing Horse @ The White Horse, 2-26 Aug (not 6, 13), 8.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Jessamine McHugh]

## Radiohead Redux 2012

### Dan Willis

We’ve all had that moment where a tune unexpectedly brings back memories. Dan Willis uses his playlist and a slideshow to relate his most memorable moments through song, be they life-changing or terrifying. The result is sporadic humour, and endearing tales of teenage awkwardness. His conversational delivery is engaging, but at times lacks energy; a selection from a stranger’s old photo album does not always make for a lively comedy performance. And while the musical moments and “guess the song” challenges are original, the tunes are very much of their time - if you’re under twenty-five and not deeply familiar with your parents’ record collection, you might be left feeling a little lost.

The City Café, 3 – 26 Aug (not 7, 14, 21), 3.00pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Pallavi Patel]

## Revill’s Selection

### Paul Revill/Laughing Horse Free Festival

In this eclectic comedy show with a changing line up, friendly and energetic host Paul Revill somewhat steals the show with his quick-witted and fast-paced comedy, though to be honest, it would have been good to see him on stage more. However, the comedians featuring the day I went were funny, outgoing and engaged well with the audience. The atmosphere at this show was amazing, partly because of the venue, but it was mainly the chat between viewers and comics that made things so convivial, as if we were just sitting around having a laugh with some really funny friends. Definitely worth a watch, even just for Revill himself, especially as there might be a bag of chocolate in it for you. I probably don’t have to spell out which kind.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, 4-26 Aug, 1.05pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Miranda Cannibal]

## Seymour Mace: Squeg!

### Seymour Mace / The Stand Comedy Club

Seymour Mace begins by explaining ‘Squeg’ - meaning square peg or alternatively, the best he could come up with back in February. The choice to perform in daylight affords a refreshing change from dimly lit basement venues and creates, surprisingly, a more relaxed, intimate atmosphere. Seymour goes on to recreate the effortless comedy of a night down the pub with mates by means of some improv based on audience suggestions, because “I was really funny before I became a comedian.” His down to earth, self-deprecating humour is not always laugh-a-minute, but certainly original. This comedian’s quirky and rambling performance works - and while Mace’s brand of silliness may not be for everyone, his unlikely charisma has everyone rooting for him by the end.

The Stand Comedy Club, 4-26 Aug, 7.00pm.

tw rating 3/ | [Pallavi Patel]

## Tony Jameson And Katie Mulgrew Tell Tales

### The Stand Comedy Club

Are they or aren’t they? A double act

or comedy partners? Actually Tony Jameson and Katie Mulgrew are like comedy flatmates sharing a venue on separate stand up shifts. With shared Northern origins there are similarities as their warmth and charm creates an amiable atmosphere in an intimate venue. The differences lie more in the down to earth delivery of “Football Manager” Jameson and more theatrical style of “Posh scally” Mulgrew. Accessible themes include Geordie shore, pet owners, family members and Ann Summers parties but although I laughed heartily and often at this show, there were a few gags that didn’t fully escalate. I am encouraged to see either comedian again as they continue to develop their art and unique selling points.

The Stand Comedy Club, 4-26Aug (not 13), 1.10pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Mara Docherty]

## Spring Day: Learn How To Take A Punch

### Spring Day / Laughing Horse Free Festival

Spring Day is bubbly, likeable and enjoys herself on stage but unfortunately a show that starts so auspiciously trails off without realising its potential. Her better material offers an insightful and hilarious analysis of life as a cultural outsider living in Japan, and what it is to be an American with a mild form of Cerebral Palsy. However, the show was cheapened by the unnecessary inclusion of smutty jokes, which were not as clever or popular as her opening material. The climax of the show eventually split the audience, with some finding Day more troubled than comic. For a show and a comic with a lot to offer, this ultimately draws some belly laughs, but more smirks.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, 2-26 Aug, 6.30pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

## DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

## Suite-Hope

### Compagnia Chiara Frigo

Beginning with a distinctly ominous voice over, ‘Suite-Hope’ is an exploration of hope through movement with the motif of exodus prominent throughout. The many ballistic, pulsating movements to the sounds of thumping drums construct a constant sense of travelling alongside the two performers and their cast of paper dolls. The paper dolls add an effective splash of colour to the stage, and there is an especially touching moment where the paper dolls are set up to resemble a ballroom and have their last dance. Those seeking easy viewing may be disappointed by challenging imagery, such as Ghandi’s appearance on a t-shirt but for those who enjoy abstraction; ‘Suite-Hope’ is extremely rewarding, thought provoking and very well performed.

Dancebase- National Centre for Dance, 4-12 Aug (not 6), times vary.

tw rating 3/5 | [Beth Dawson]

## Undercovered

### RHUL Drama Society

‘Undercovered’ follows the story Mark Stone, alias Mark Kennedy, who worked undercover for several years exposing the plans of radical environmentalists. The show impressively outlines this complex, political affair without bias or moral judgement, leaving the audience to decide for themselves how they feel about the distressing sequence of events. There are long interludes of uninspiring physical theatre which fail to add anything to the narrative, but clearly evidence the ensemble approach the young company have taken in creating their piece. The projections on the back-wall of the stage add a much-needed clarity, the highlight being a bird’s eye view of a hospital bed, which Kennedy stands in front of after being badly beaten. Ambitious, if not entirely successful.

theSpace on North Bridge, 4-11 Aug (not 5), 4.40pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Stephanie Taylor]

## MUSIC

## Andy And The Prostitutes - The Musical

### Andy And The Prostitutes

The story of Andy and his band of former prisoners (coming over something like the lovechild of The Blues Brothers and Frankie Boyle) makes for a brilliant show. As Andy recounts the absurdist tale of how he came to be imprisoned and thus meet his band, we are led along his grimy path of sexual perversion, drug abuse, and Disney sponsorship to a rocky tune that you can’t help but clap, tap, and sing along to. With an original and macabre setlist, Andy and his band aim to please the politically incorrect in a fresh and rousing manner. Songs as comically and musically accomplished as ‘Benefits Girl’ and ‘Uncle Walt’ make you glad you visited ‘The Prostitutes’.

Laughing Horse @ The Phoenix, 3-26 Aug, 7.00pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Christopher Rumbles]

## Moon

### The Australian Voices

Caught somewhere between contemporary choral music, physical theatre and art, ‘Moon’ is an original epic song of love. Characterisation comes not from soloists but from the group as a whole, with the storytelling aided by tasteful projected images. The piece contains staggeringly beautiful harmonies, cleverly executed a cappella techniques such as sound imitation and beat-boxing, and innovative forms of performance and singing which keep you on your toes. A little more audience engagement and facial expression might not have hurt, but this show is performed by a talented and slick group, and there is really nothing wrong with it at all, except that you may use up a lot of tissues if you get as emotional about such exquisite music, as I do.

theSpace @ Symposium Hall, Aug 3-25, 7.00pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Grace Hardy]

## THEATRE

## Would Be Nice Though...

### Odd Comic (Holly Bodmer And Dot Howard)/Escalator East To Edinburgh

Coming across like ‘The Office’ directed by Jean Paul Sartre, Odd Comic’s surreal site specific piece puts unsuspecting audiences through the familiar, demeaning process of a job interview. Guiding proceedings subtly at first, then progressively more outrageously, co-devisers Holly Bodmer and Dot Howard play doomed candidates with convincing commitment. Damaged, paranoid and competitive as they are, they remain strangely likeable, and there are some touching moments amongst the bickering and one upping. As with the performance as a whole, your mileage will vary depending on how many terrible interviews you’ve attended and how funny you find cringing silences, but this is a bold, silly performance. What’s more, it’s exactly the kind of unconventional, unexpected piece which makes the Fringe so exciting.

Pleasance at Essential Edinburgh, 3-18 Aug, times vary.

tw rating 4/5 | [Dave Fargnoli]

## Rainbow

### Sell a Door Theatre Company and Boxed Cat Theatre

Pay close attention to ‘Rainbow’; it will strike you as moving, smart, and powerful. Three men relate their stories and how they connect with and affect each others tales; all are disturbed and broken on some level, and it is their very humanness and the spectacular acting of the cast that makes the play shine colourfully. Meanwhile, the simplistic set design and mirrors direct all attention to the story. The ending is cryptic, never fully explaining itself, which could potentially vex the audience and it seems strange that for a show with such a name, the only lighting ever on stage is blue. Nevertheless, “Rainbow” shines

with brilliance and covers a spectrum of dramatic feeling and powerful truth.

Zoo Southside, 3-27 Aug, 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Ana-Claudia Magaña]

## The Ride Of The Bluebottles Olsson Theatre

The Bluebottles are a mismatched four-piece band who fail to find fame because of the flawed members’ conflicts of interest. In this darkly comic play, the tension mounts in the green room before and after a momentous gig, a scene effectively suggested by sparse staging and almost real-time action that increased the fraught dynamic between the well-delineated characters. After an intriguing beginning and enjoyable middle, the climax lacked real impact, playing on the creative-genius-ruined-by-drug-addiction cliché too heavily; the obvious foreshadowing did not quite produce the dramatic irony it was aiming for. All in all the believable dialogue from convincing actors and sprinklings of humour made this production likeable, but not mindblowing.

theSpace on the Mile, 3 - 25 Aug (not 5, 12, 19), 11.10am.

tw rating 3/5 | [Emily Pulsford]

## Sealand

### The Alchemist

Refreshingly relevant to the problems encountered within society, ‘Sealand’ explores the notion that it’s possible to start again and build a Utopia. Leaving behind ‘Broken Britain’, Ted, his son and another family build a revolutionary country in the middle of the ocean. In this accomplished production the acting is strong and emotionally complex, while the set is dynamic and makes the most of a platform and a lower level, therefore scene changes are engaging to watch. ‘Sealand’ is an imaginative concept which explores the obsession with creating a better life when humans are essentially flawed... evolving gradually into a chilling and emotionally riveting tale which grabs you when you least expect it.

Zoo, 4-27 Aug, 5.15pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Khristine Gallagher]

## School Of Night

### The Sticking Place - Festival Highlights

Totally bonkers, ‘School of Night’ is a weird hybrid of a high school English lesson and a broad, tawdry comedy show. Weird isn’t bad however, and while the Shakespearean shtick may initially go over your head, the performers are always there to talk you through exactly what’s going on. And what exactly is going on is a semi-improvised parody of a Shakespeare play in which the actors bounce off audience suggestion. The cast are all incredibly impressive, making improv in Elizabethan lingo look almost easy (although you do get the feeling they might be rhyming off Shakespeare’s shopping list and you would be none the wiser). Still, the Bard has never been this much fun, or indeed, as zanily insane.

The Pleasance Courtyard, 4-26 Aug (15), 3.05pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Patricia-Ann Young]

## Interruption

### Cambridge University Amateur Dramatic Club

From the highly conceptualised (and very abstract) premise to the individually wrapped sweets awaiting each audience member with the message “You know that’s not how it happened”, at first glance ‘Interruption’ looked twee, highbrow and a little bit self-indulgent. That wasn’t how it happened. Each compact scene was brilliantly devised and quietly devastating, thanks to some perfectly realistic performances, leaving the audience amidst a perpetual cloud of dawning realisation in which to piece together the story. Although there were some themes that were superfluous (I never quite got the hare metaphor), the production could have simply done without them, along with the surrounding gimmicks, because it already had everything it needed to be a truly beautiful piece of theatre.

C nova, 2-18 Aug, 8.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Rachel Aroesti]

## Hearts On Fire Peculius Stage

“What you think about, you bring about,” says James Ray, real-life lifestyle guru and central character of ‘Hearts On Fire’. Staged in a small tent filled with sand, the play echoes that mantra by trying to make its audience experience the claustrophobic final moments of Ray’s 2009 Arizona desert “sweat lodge” retreat, where three people died. But the effect is never quite achieved. The installation is too bright, and the sweat lodge scene is the play’s weakest, as participants descend too rapidly from health to death. There are also distracting inconsistencies, with characters veering between devoted and cynical with little explanation. The cast do well with a difficult task, but ultimately the production’s power of suggestion is not strong enough.

C nova, 2 - 27 Aug, 4.50pm, 7.50pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Sarah Richardson]

## Do You Still Throw Spears At Each Other? - Free

### Dotted Line Productions

The Duke of Edinburgh is back in town with a bloody good show. George Telfer’s caricature of Prince Phillip is uncanny; from a mastery of his bumbling tone, to a staggering grasp of his mannerisms, to a curious failure to adjust to the times, this is exactly how you imagine Phillip to be behind closed doors. Telfer embellishes his life story with a witty script, finding comedy in his historical inability to keep his mouth shut and the readiness of the Tabloids to prey on his gaffes. Making good use of an awkward room and audio excerpts as well as the national anthem, this is an unmissable hour of dramatic monologue, littered with Philip’s most memorable and hilarious slip-ups.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, 2-11 Aug, 6.30pm

tw rating 4/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

## Dating George Orwell - Free

### Kelly Jones/Laughing Horse Free Festival

Some books were harmed in the making of this show. In Kelly Jones’ new one woman comedy, “Sexy Pauline” does some things with an Aldous Huxley which should never be done. While the book fetish concept is relatively novel, the rest is too concerned with plumbing the loner stereotype: the gay father, prom humiliation, lunchtime loo reading. It’s all been done before and much, much better than this. The pity is that Jones might even be a decent actress, at her best when she briefly switches into other characters. Such switches, however, are all too rare and mainly she sticks with the part of Pauline Duffy, who we’re left wondering why we should even care about.

Laughing Horse@The White Horse, 2-18 Aug, 4.45pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Lia Sanders]

## Call Me!

### By The Slice Theatre Company

Ever left a drunken voicemail that you really shouldn’t have? Witty and rather horribly familiar, ‘Call Me!’ involves two parallel plots: a story of increasingly desperate answer phone messages and the other a mapping of the initial uncertainty one couple experiences. Granted, the plots are linked almost as an afterthought, but I’m still so loved up that it doesn’t bother me. All the actors embrace the monologues that the answer phone device leads to, engaging the audience with characters bold enough to be recognisably and entertainingly cringey, without becoming stereotypes. While we might have all heard the ‘message’ before, that doesn’t mean it shouldn’t be said, especially if it means we stop beating ourselves up for that drunken text.

Sweet Grassmarket, 2-26 Aug (not 6, 13, 18, 25), 10.10pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Lia Sanders]

## ThreeWeeks

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