

# ThreeWeeks EDINBURGH



## COMEDY

### Do Not Adjust Your Stage

Do Not Adjust Your Stage / PBH's Free Fringe

TV-themed improvisation from a young, energetic troupe; this was pretty conventional stuff, but not without its impressive moments. After extracting themes for a soap, game show and documentary from the audience's suggestions, parts of these were then acted out in channel-hopping alternation, some with more success than others. It became clear that a couple of the performers had real talent as they embraced the inevitable mind-blanks and awkward exchanges of the genre and turned them into the most endearing and funny moments. Like all but the very best improvised sketch shows it did drag at times, but if you want to see some improv while at the Fringe (which I recommend you do), you could do a lot worse than this. Why not?, 4-25 Aug (not 14, 21), 4.15pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Rachel Aroesti]

### Fat Kitten Goes Speed Dating

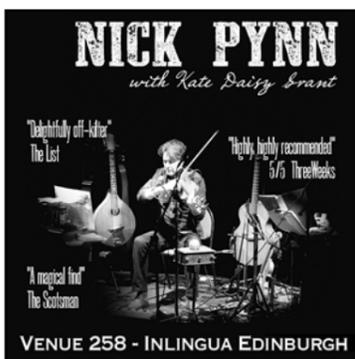
Fat Kitten Improv / PBH's Free Fringe

Who knew speed dating could be this hilarious? The element of surprise with Fat Kitten's speed dating game brings about delicious possibilities as they leave fate in the audience's hands and a deck of cards. Be captivated by the intelligent and witty group's sheer talent as they confidently jump to portray any character. Based mainly on impressions and sharp wit, the humour in this show is mostly vocally-centred humour which leaves the show on a rather static level; however, character highlights were many, the arrogant King of Romania, for example, and a web developer with an exotic accent. But you won't encounter these characters if you have the chance to experience this exciting group - that's the beauty and fleeting nature of improv!

The Voodoo Rooms, 6-14 Aug, 4.50pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Khristine Gallagher]

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

Nick's demeanour and choice of venue suited his comedy style. His articulate, natural storytelling ability saw him sewing together a series of anecdotes in an amusing account of squandered opportunities and a life of potential thrown out the window. He engaged well with certain members of the audience to great comical effect, but, as he testified himself, he's not the type to hold anyone up and ridicule them, so fear not. The show should have been a little shorter; the grip he had on me was loosened towards the end; but I was left with the impression this is an intelligent man who perhaps has more serious things to joke about. Great for a light hearted and relaxing afternoon of fun, humorous stories.



**SNAP OF THE DAY:** Eleanor Conway can often be found performing a 'Midnight Rumble' at Underbelly Bristo Square. Photo: Kat Gollock

The Shack Comedy Club & Nightclub, 6-25 August, 3.30 pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Joe Mountford-Smith]

### Funny Women At The Fringe

Time is probably the audience's most precious commodity at the Fringe and competitions like these are good value, providing tasters of comedians' hour-long acts. Last year's winner Lara A King hosted, as four other female comics, Sarah Callaghan, Kerry Gilbert, Lucy Frederick and finally, my favourite, Katherine Ryan, each did a sterling job at tempting the crowd into seeing their solo shows. Some might bemoan the gender-exclusivity of the showcase (and the implication that male and female comics shouldn't compete in the same arena) and the free Benefit make-up did feel a little patronising. It also wasn't very clear how the competition worked, or who would be appearing in future shows; despite that, a safe bet for the Festival-goer.

Assembly George Square, 3-17 Aug (not 6, 7), 2.00pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Rachel Aroesti]

### Pappy's: Last Show Ever!

Phil McIntyre Entertainments By Arrangement With Lisa Thomas Management

If this is Pappy's farewell, they certainly bow out with a bang. This show has

everything from jovial sing-alongs and dramatic musical sequences to hilarious character comedy and silly sketches. Using abstract ideas from 'Wizard of Oz', to gloves, to the full moon, the sketches are inventively written and consistently polished like a GB gold medal. However this is not just some wish-wash compilation of Pappy's most random ideas, this is ingeniously bound together in theatrical structure as the trio guide the audience forwards and backwards in time, narrating the story of their break-up years later. This is real feel good comedy: fast-paced, original, mind-blowingly creative, and side-splittingly funny.

Pleasance Dome, 1-27 Aug (not 3, 14), 8.20pm tw rating 5/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

### Peter Antoniou's Psychic Circus

Peter Antoniou is very warm, intelligent and energetic and his one-man-show is suitable for audiences of all ages, shapes and sizes. He performs playful and charming tricks that - though not necessarily original - are presented in a refreshing new light. Whether Antoniou is mind reading his awestruck audience by exposing their first flings or controlling them as a ventriloquist, this is very stylistically executed and optimised for comedic effect. A lot of laughter also stems from Antoniou's very personable treatment of the audience, whose

attention he commands masterfully throughout. The tricks can be slow in parts, and a little repetitive, but Peter Antoniou is very convincing, and also a very likeable showman.

Sweet Grassmarket, 2-26 Aug (not 18, 25), 3.35pm tw rating: 4/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

### Sammy J And Randy - The Inheritance

Sammy J (tall, blonde, adorable) and Randy (short, purple, made of felt) return with fourth-wall breaking, adventure-musical 'The Inheritance'. Heart-warming, funny and joyfully silly, the play sees the comedian and his puppet companion travelling from Australia to Scunthorpe after Randy's centenarian uncle dies, with a secret lurking at the heart of his inheritance. The songs are catchy and well-written, and the show is inventively staged, avoiding (and occasionally embracing) the potential problems of having a puppet co-star (voiced and operated wonderfully by Sammy's longtime collaborator Heath McIvor). Combining many of the most fun bits of musicals and comedy, it's a show that'll leave you in a great mood for the rest of the day.

Underbelly, Bristo Square, 1-27 Aug (not 13), 6.05pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Holly Close]

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## Shappi Khorsandi: Dirty Looks And Hopscotch

Off The Kerb Productions

Radio 4 panel show favourite Shappi Khorsandi has just broken up with a rock star and wants to tell us all about it. Cue an hour of confessional humour on topics as varied as scat, humping teddy bears and diversity awareness training. Khorsandi pulls off the adult gags with aplomb and the audience loves it, but the set has a tendency to veer more into therapy than laughter when she discusses her ex's emotional manipulations, knocking some of the life out of the gig. A little more filth and a little less therapy would lift this from a good show to a great one but, as it stands, it's just a bit workmanlike for a big name comedian.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-26 (not 13), 8.30pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Andrew Bell]

## The Cambridge Footlights: Perfect Strangers

Cambridge Footlights

Although they may only be amateur students, the reputation of their comedy forebears precedes them, and engenders high levels of expectation. Fortunately enough, this year's Cambridge comedy sketch troupe doesn't disappoint. 'Perfect Strangers' tackles all styles, from satire to slapstick and everything in between, and despite no clear link between sketches, the show progresses seamlessly by using a repeated formula: building expectations and then smashing them. The group demonstrate a brilliant ability to create madness from the mundane; a game of Monopoly, for instance, becomes an absurd sketch about a brutal bailiff. No individual needs a specific mention, as all five are fantastically funny. This is a show that should be seen by everyone.

Pleasance Dome, 6-27 Aug, 4.00pm.  
tw rating 5/5 | [Conor Riordan]

## The Human Condition – Free Cameron The Comedian Davis

You don't expect much from a comedy show when the opening line is, "we'll try a few things and see what works". Indeed, categorising this show as 'comedy' at all is a stretch as it limps around for thirty minutes – despite being billed for fifty-five. Instead, it is more of a Spoken Word performance, as Cameron Davis absent-mindedly muses about the Olympics, fairytales and even his Year 4 report card. There are a few chuckles, but he misses the comic mark far more than he hits it; the delivery of already mediocre material is stilted and punctured by constant (and unprofessional) reference to his notes. The overall impression is of someone whose heart really isn't in it.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, 3-26 Aug (not 6, 13, 20), 1.00pm.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Olivia Sleet]

## The Oxford Revue – Prattle Royale Oxford Revue

The bright young things from The Oxford Revue return to Edinburgh with another side-achingly entertaining show. The writing and piecing together of the sketches in this one hour show was witty, inventive and extremely clever, leaving me astonished at the level of professionalism shown by this group. What's more, the seven performers clearly possess fantastic chemistry and play off each other beautifully, adding to the hilarity of the show. The delivery of each sketch was outstanding; it's quite clear that these guys really know their craft already, displaying a talent equalling that of some of the more established performers I've seen. I implore you to get yourself to Cowgate and watch the comedy stars of the future.

Underbelly Cowgate, 2-26 Aug (not 15), 4.00pm  
tw rating 5/5 | [Simon Thornton]

## The Six O’Clock Club Six O’Clock Club / PBH’s Free Fringe

I must confess to avoiding free showcases at the Fringe, because they are usually so mediocre that I almost always wish that I had just paid ten pounds to watch a polished comedian in one of the corporate venues instead. Four of the five acts during 'The Six O'Clock Club' hardened my attitude with their offerings of banal

observations, ill-advised innuendos, and only occasional glimmers of promise. Luckily, Matt Rees, a downbeat Welshman who has won a glut of awards recently, saved the show from being an utter disaster with a tremendously compelling routine, reminiscent of the work of Mark Watson. I would not be surprised if Mr. Rees were nominated for the Comedy Awards best newcomer gong in a few years. He has talent.

Kilderkin, 4 – 25 Aug (not 13), 6.00pm.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Joseph Fleming]

## The Tim And Pat Show

Tim and Pat begin their show with the perfect ending; an encore and rapturous applause. The problem is however, you can't just convince an audience they've seen an amazing show, which is actually just as well because then they'd miss out on this little gem. Vacillating between the whimsical and the absurd with a pinch of sarcasm thrown into the mix, it's hard at times to decide whether the show is meant to be one great big spoof or if this is actually just reality for these two comedians. Either way, it only serves to add to the overall charm. They will leave you constantly guessing yet constantly entertained. That is until you get to the end. Or is it the beginning?

The Cabaret Voltaire, 5-25 August, 5.00pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Anna McDonald]

## The Two O’Clock Show

Freyberg, Hannant and Boyd / PBH's Free Fringe

A laid back production from some charming, clever and quality comedians. The show begins with much of the usual chitchat between act and audience, which works well enough and is even insightful, with facts about Mitt Romney being aired by David Hannant. Chic geek Anna Freyberg, appeals from the offset, with a routine that is both intelligent and bizarre. Finally, Chris Boyd, who could so easily be dubbed the next Lenny Bruce, solves fundamental relationship issues such as the temperature of your bedroom. Whilst the show is funny, it fails to get the crowd laughing often enough, and never in hysterics. Nevertheless, for an enjoyable start to your afternoon on the cheap it is worth a visit.

The Banshee Labyrinth, 6-25 (not 13) Aug, 2.00pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Conor Riordan]

## Thea-Skot’s Miss Adventures Alison Thea-Skot

Actress and comedian Alison Thea-Skot and her comic arsenal of zany characters take the audience on a ride from the whimsical to the manic. From the first moment she springs onto the stage, she radiates energy: even the most reluctant audience participant doesn't stand a chance. The surreal skits are by turns hilarious and awkward, and the humour ranges from silly to surprisingly dark. Not everything works, and more than one scene leaves the crowd simply baffled, while the wacky sometimes overrides the humour; but Thea-Skot's unstoppable, bubbly energy is irresistible. Who wouldn't want to attend the 37th annual football mascots' conference with Alison in charge?

The Caves, 5-26 Aug (not 14), 3.40pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Pallavi Patel]

## Tim Fitzhigham: Stop The Pigeon Get Comedy

In 1753, the fourth Duke of Queensberry, an infamous rake, wagered that he could transport a letter fifty miles in just an hour; an amazing claim, given that the fastest horse and carriage of the period could not even travel half that distance over the time. In 2012, the delightfully eccentric Tim Fitzhigham repeated the bet with the same technology that would have been at Queensberry's disposal. Fitzhigham narrated the fascinating tale of his attempt with the enthusiasm of a child on Christmas morning. He was a captivating raconteur, and, by the finale, everybody in the audience was rooting for a positive outcome for this utterly pointless challenge. God bless FitzHigham – the Fringe would be noticeably blander without his ridiculous capers.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug (not 15), 7.30pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Joseph Fleming]

## WitTank Avalon Promotions

Whoever said that comedy is subjective is lying; as Mark, Naz and Kieran are undoubtedly three of the most witty and talented sketch comedians of this decade. You may have seen them on BBC's 'Live At The Electric'; but now you can see their eclectic hour long show, in which they provide sketch comedy like no other; they're always two steps ahead of the audience, and will have you laughing so much that it hurts. Year on year, WitTank deliver excellent shows, committing fully to each and every role, willing to strip down to their underpants to get a giggle. Although "born out of failure" it is clear that these comedians are destined for success as masters of their trade.

Pleasance Courtyard, 6-26 Aug (not 14), 6.20pm  
tw rating: 5/5 | [Emma Obank]

## DANCE & PHYSICAL THEATRE

### Alba Flamenca

In the intimate basement of a Spanish bar, 'Alba Flamenca' offered an authentic taste of Flamenco dance and music, with the dancers complementing the melody of the guitar and singing. The performance contained so much energy that many audience members could not help shouting, clapping and stomping along to the contagious rhythms and the warmth from the performers was infectious. The musical pieces were interspersed with brief explanations of what each piece is about, and a variety of styles from within the Flamenco genre were presented, from Alegrías from Cadiz to the Cuban influenced Tango routine, making the performance informative as well as entertaining. Even though all the song lyrics are in Spanish, non-Spanish speakers will not feel left out.

Alba Flamenca, 5-26 Aug, times vary.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Beth Dawson]

## THEATRE

### An Audience with the Duke of Windsor

Richard Jordan Productions Ltd in association with Assembly

An extraordinary look into the life of a man who gave up his kingdom for love, this true to life portrayal of Edward, Duke of Windsor is emotionally charged and engaging. Bob Kingdom is wholly convincing as the ex-monarch writing his memoirs, caught up in his wife's vivaciousness and thrust into the public eye. The play is both humorous and touching, creating sympathy for this man who has lost control of his own destiny. Kingdom leads us through his story with a perfect monologue which is at times interrupted by his wife's voice ringing in his mind from off-stage or on the phone. While it is perhaps a little too lengthy, this is a fascinating historical piece.

Assembly Hall, 6-27 Aug, 12.00pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Lauren Houghton]

### A Dastardly Fiction

Haystacks Theatre Company

'A Dastardly Fiction' is about a failed author who sells his soul to a demon so that he can become the success he always dreamed of. Unfortunately, his characters come to life and plot to kill him. I think. The story was convoluted and confused, with major gaping plot holes throughout. Characters would casually shred previously established traits and did things for no reason at all, with zilch explanation behind plot twists and turns. In desperate need of a rewrite, it's more of a string of incoherent thoughts than a fully-fledged play. It's unfair on a cast that clearly capable of much better, but the best intentions can't save this utter mess of a script. A dastardly fiction, indeed.

Greenside, 5-25 Aug (not 12 & 29), times vary.  
tw rating 1/5 | [Patricia-Ann Young]

### Angels Blindhorse

If you like a story being screamed at you for an hour, then go see 'Angels'. True, Iain Robertson has powerful emotion, but one wonders if he will cough blood at some point; his performance is

overacted, resulting in him sweating all over the stage. The words are poetic, but poetry is a better medium for this story than theatre; some of the imagery is too abstract. The story in itself is uninteresting, allowing the mind to wander, and the only redeeming qualities of the show are the music—which there should be more of—and about five minutes where Robertson describes a dream about Scarlett Johansson. If you are going to pay almost twenty quid, this show is not worth the money.

Traverse Theatre, 2-26 Aug (not Mondays), times vary.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Ana-Claudia Magaña]

## Anything But (A One-Woman Play) KCHG Productions

Agnes is struggling to overcome the death of her father, or more accurately, to overcome the forced social interactions at the funeral. Her life is defined by a series of awkward incidents, with witty anecdotes, a warm self-deprecation and a love of cheesy snacks in between. Comprising many small sketches, the play has an overarching narrative that wavers between comedy and tragedy, and in general, it works well. However, while Agnes's nervous mannerisms and self-conscious timidity are ultimately endearing, they stifles the delivery of many lines, leaving the audience mostly unaffected by what should be hilarious and memorable material.

Pleasance Courtyard, 5-27 Aug, 2.00pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Paige Wilson]

### Dream/Life Kudos

What is going on? Audience typing away on their laptops, laughing randomly, change of scene followed by change of scene followed by jumping out of seats, by dreaming, by loving, by plotting... In an absurd world of white linen, magical love tokens and multicoloured velvet, the passionate cast wanders from dream to life and back, in a story that is almost Shakespearian in dialogue and Hollywood in plot. Powerful players do their best to make the developments obvious and clear, but the deeper meaning of many parts might only become clearer after an intense study of the text. If life is a dream and dreams are life, this might be a classic in the making.

Zoo, 3-18 Aug, 4.00pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Veronika Kallus]

## As Ye Sow Theatre Of The Damned and Bare Bawds Theatre

Homes for the elderly do make unpleasant viewing material on stage; perhaps it's a fear of dying, or the recent care home abuse scandals, which make us uncomfortable. Horror-play 'As Ye Sow' draws on these fears but doesn't quite manage to make them matter: the play is flat and feels like filler for the horror, which is as effective as loud unpleasant noises tend to be, but gives no insight into what it's like to live in a care home other than it's a bit like being haunted, or being punished. Thankfully, the occasional jumpy bits provide the audience with the adrenaline that's lacking in the plot, but the acting is often underwhelming. There are subtleties to the production but little else to reap.

Pleasance Dome, 6-27 Aug, 12.00am.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Thom May]

## Big Sean, Mikey And Me

Ruaraidh Murray

The story of a life spent running with the rough crowd in Edinburgh and beyond, this one-man show is full of heart and never too charged with bravado. It's a story from the point of view of the scared little boy inside every big man of the street, and recollections of school days are interspersed with memories of visiting friends in prison. It's not a bleak piece at all, in fact mostly it is riotously funny, though darker themes emerge, of course. A pleasing motif is Ruaraidh's conversations with 'Big Sean', his childhood hero turned imaginary friend, making a focal point for this entertaining illustration of a young man's struggle to find a male role model. Moving, funny and full of impact.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 1-27 Aug, 1.30pm  
tw rating 4/5 | [Roz Tuplin]

## Chapel Street

Presented by SCRAWL

Ria Zmitrowicz and Cary Crankson shine in this debut play by talented new writer, Luke Barnes. Standing in front of two microphones, the actors begin to recount with a startling intimacy a sequence of events that led their paths to cross. Guaranteed to make you feel a bundle of emotions in quick succession, sometimes a mixture of them all at once: full of despair, anger, humour and hope, the story of Kirsty and Joe is told with an affecting urgency, a need for people to listen. The fast rhythm of their overlapping lines hurtles us almost too quickly towards its climax, and it seems over before it has even begun. An unmissable show as part of the Old Vic New Voices Edinburgh Season.

Underbelly Cowgate, 2-26 Aug (not 14), 2.50pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Stephanie Taylor]

## Desperately Seeking the Exit Peter Michael Marino

For a show about a West End flop, American writer Peter Michael Marino delivers a success with his comedy skit, 'Desperately Seeking the Exit'. Marino incorporates brilliant humour into his story of the staging of 'Desperately Seeking Susan', a jukebox musical which was staged – and which failed miserably – at the Novello Theatre in London. Witty, smart, and hilarious, the show also includes Marino's comparisons between British and American cultures that are funny and accurate, earning nods and laughter from the audience, many of whom leave the show with tears in their eyes. Marino is charismatic and an excellent storyteller and his impersonations of his theatre colleagues are funny and engaging. Audiences will not be desperately seeking the exit anytime soon.

Edinburgh City Football Club, 6-26 Aug, 6.00pm.  
tw rating 5/5 | [Ana-Claudia Magaña]

## Detention

Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio

It is well known that if you are foolish enough to leave some boys alone in a classroom then mayhem will ensue. Equally true is the fact that adding a girl to the mix will only make matters worse, as the testosterone-fuelled lads simply must outdo each other. 'Detention' is placed in just such a setting, and the opportunity to show off is exactly what the extremely talented members of Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio need to shine. Given the Olympic fever currently gripping Britain it could hardly be more appropriate to take in a show which contains both gymnastic grace and sharp comedy, so I urge you to buy a ticket for 'Detention'.

Summerhall, 1-26 Aug (not 6, 13, 20), 1.00pm  
tw rating 5/5 | [Nicholas Jones]

## Everything Else Happened Dream Epic

Intimate and beautifully poignant, 'Everything Else Happened', fuses together four seemingly unrelated stories that are united by themes of loss and loneliness. In this heartbreaking and at times heart-warmingly funny show, each character's life is presented as a snippet in a simple room. Guaranteed to induce a lump in the throat is a man's conversation with his wife via answering machine; revealing the unspoken words we long to say... but simply can't. Praise goes to the unexpected use of a power point presentation which reveals how a family communicate through unspoken words, pauses and silences. This finely represents the pain, disappointment and loss we encounter in our daily lives, but does it in a poignant and soothing manner.

Assembly Roxy, 6-27 Aug, 1.00pm  
twrating 5/5 | [Kristine Gallagher]

## ThreeWeeks

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