

ThreeWeeks EDINBURGH



COMEDY

An Austrian And Someone From Slough

Cecilia Delatori and Alice Frick
Slough-based landlady, Cecilia Delatori, and her Austrian lodger, Alice Frick, have joined forces in this stand-up show inspired by the places they have inhabited and visited. Guitar-clad Delatori framed the show with some inventive comic songs that blended astute observation and downright silliness to good effect. In between, Frick related humorous personal experiences, most memorably that of being a temporary jailbird and Alcoholics Anonymous member. Her Austrian heritage fuelled material on cultural differences but some were sadly lost in translation; Frick has clearly read, but not yet mastered, the comedy rulebook. Both women performed with energy and showed promise for the future, but the show missed the mark on this occasion.

Laughing Horse @ Jekyll & Hyde, 2-26 Aug (not 14, 21), 4.20pm.
tw rating 2/5 | [Emily Pulsford]



Big Value Comedy's Lunchtime Club

Ben Van Der Velde, David Murphy, Andrea Hubert, Jonathon Elston
True to its name, 'Big Value Comedy's Lunchtime Club' presents a series of talented up-and-coming comedians for an extraordinary price; it's a phenomenon which seems to be rare at the Fringe this year. Ben Van Der Velde is an amazing host, quick witted and unapologetic, his quirky anecdotes had the entire audience chuckling. The line up is one of comic misfits; David Murphy is the quintessential nerd offering Power Ranger references galore; Andrea Hubert tells tales of towering over people, while Jonathan Elston relates his frequent failures with women. The latter two had the odd moment when things fell a bit flat, though it hardly mattered, while Murphy and Van Der Velde delivered flawless performances.

Just the Tonic at the Caves: Just Up the Road, 5-26 Aug, 12.30pm
tw rating 4/5 | [Ellie Willis]



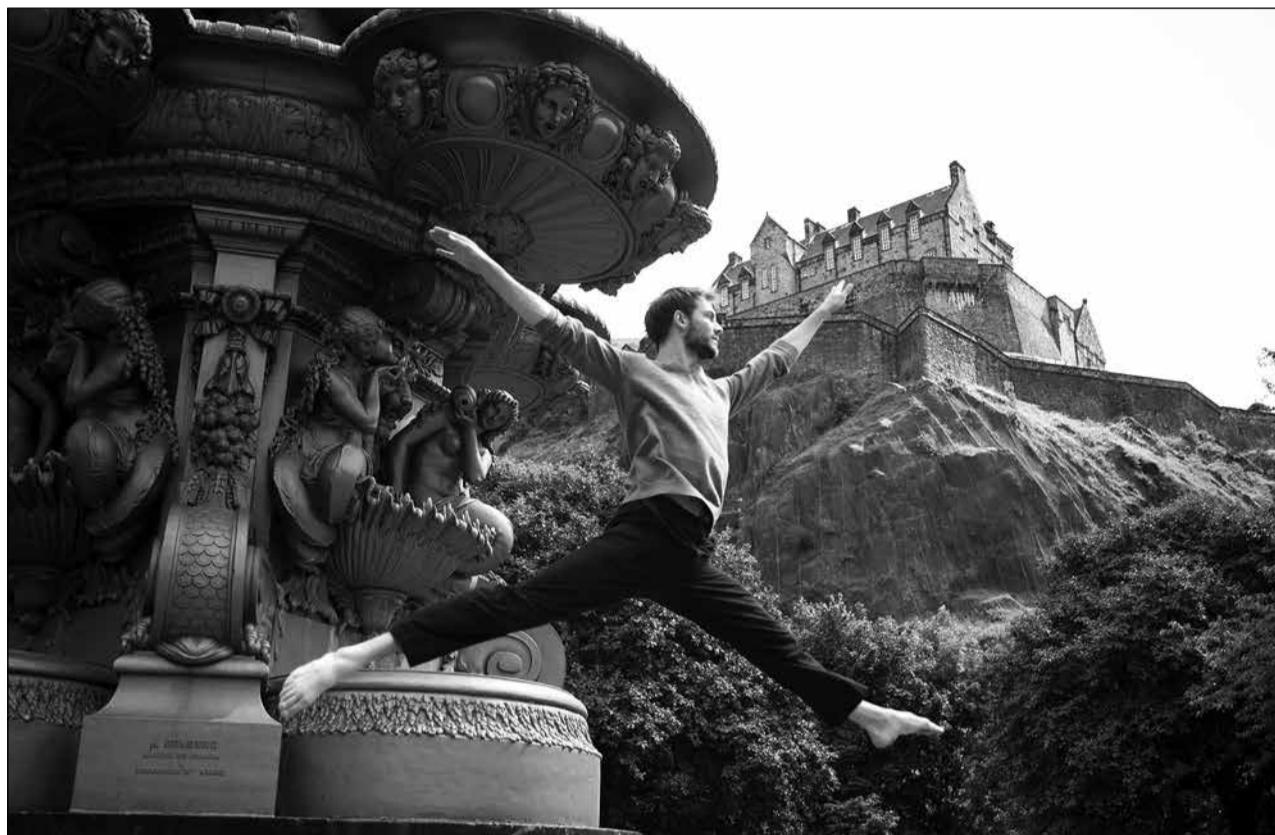
Black Country Cider Lions - Free

Leon Clifford, Rob Jackson And Rob Kemp/Free Fringe
With a bit of a misleading name (there's little to do with cider or lions, though all the stand-ups do come from the Midlands), Black Country Cider Lions had a few good moments, but overall was slightly lacklustre. MC Rob Jackson was good on admin, but fairly poor at getting the crowd warmed up, resigning himself to grumpy anecdotes about over-politeness. Leon Clifford was a little better, working quickly through a list of passable jokes, though it did often seem like he'd given up on making this particular audience laugh. The final act, and best of the bunch, was

Assembly George Square, 2-27 Aug (not 11), 3.20pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Simon Thornton]

Gagging For Attention

DMU Footlights
Not sure who to see at the Fringe? Gagging for Attention brings you a changing selection of four new acts plus a compère. The ten-minute sets made for a fast-paced performance, free of the lulls typically



SNAP OF THE DAY: Back in Edinburgh after a sell-out run at Fringe 2011, Smallpetitklein Dance Company's evocative 'Within This Dust' at Dance Base. Photo: Kat Gollock

Rob Kemp, whose clever material was only undermined by a lack of confidence in his set.

Laughing Horse @ Bar 50, 3-26 Aug, 6.05pm.
tw rating 2/5 | [Holly Close]

Four Screws Loose in #screwttheworld

James Grant Comedy

Ever wondered what happened to Super Mario and the Princess after the video game? What if the film *Titanic* would have been like if it was performed solely through pop-chart hits? Well, these are just a couple of the ferociously funny sketches that had me crying with laughter during this brilliant show. Guaranteed to leave you gagging for more, this is a melting pot of pure comedy gold; from the hilarious musical opener right through to the climax, the eclectic mix of material, excellent staging and the four performers' great chemistry combine to make a perfect, must-see Fringe show. I'm certain that this comedy troupe will be pleasing crowds for a long time.

Assembly George Square, 2-27 Aug (not 11), 3.20pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Simon Thornton]

Darling... imaginative'

Stage 'Must See' Show

Kipper Tie Theatre and I Theatre with C theatre

Our Island

2-27 Aug at 1.20pm

Venue 4

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seen in some stand-up shows, and so the audience were immediately drawn in and the upbeat atmosphere was infectious.

Banter was silly and thoroughly enjoyable as compère Ben Hustwayte introduced the comedians, all of whom were young, enthusiastic and very confident, and though some stood out more than others, this show never lost its momentum. With a changing daily line-up, this is clearly one place to be to catch the up and coming talent of the comedy world.

Just The Tonic at The Caves, 5-26 Aug, 2.15pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Pallavi Patel]

Fragments Of Monotony/An Audience With Sir Dickie Benson

The Brethren of Levity/PBH's Free Fringe

This show promised 'Fragments of Monotony'; sadly it was not just fragments but an entire thirty minutes of mind-numbing boredom that we had to endure. Aside from making the questionable career decision to make his act as boring as possible, our host Johnny F Monotone also subjected us to the hideous awkwardness of 'Methylated Pete', Sebastian Bloomfield's sock-puppet friend. Slightly more laughs were to be had (not that it would be difficult) in the second half of the show with 'Sir Dickie Benson', a lecherous Oscar-winning TV star. After the sheer awkwardness of the first half, Peet Torjussen's humorous persona was a relief, and therefore got more laughs than he maybe deserved for hitting on two women in the front row who swore never to make

the mistake of sitting stage-side again.

WhyNot?, 5-25 Aug, 12.30pm
tw rating 2/5 | [Charlotte Ryan]

Best of the Fest Daytime

Assembly

A selection of comedians served up with singing and acrobatics on the side, 'Best of the Fest' is a perfect way to spend the afternoon if you're unsure what to see. Obviously, given there's a number of different acts, some are going to be more to your taste than others, but being named the 'best' means that they are all of a high standard. For me the compere Al Pitcher stole the show, but Piff the Magic Dragon gets a special mention for his hilarious card tricks and facial expressions. The atmosphere in the Spiegeltent was fantastic, with a loud and enthusiastic audience, and I left with some great ideas for what I might want to see later.

Assembly George Square, 5-25 Aug, 2.15pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Lauren Houghton]

Bad Bread 2012: Survival Guide

Bad Bread

This is a delightfully creative show, with a variety of sketches that could only have been imagined by the quirky trio behind it. By dramatising mundane events and characterising inanimate objects, they find the non-obvious comic potential in dog walks, Teletubbies and even Monopoly. The sketches were imaginatively performed too - in spite of the patchy accents - and linked neatly through cont-

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4 - 18 Aug (not 6 or 13)

Daring... imaginative'
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cont> the apparently impending apocalypse, fuelling the endless energy on-stage. The show does try to be a bit too clever in parts, venturing a Holocaust gag and even a Maddy McCann joke that crowd members visibly disapproved of, but the strength of this show lies in creative, surreal and truly random sketches, for which it is absolutely brilliant.

Underbelly, 2-26 Aug (not 14), 5.20pm

tw rating 4/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

This Arthur's Seat Belongs To Lionel Richie

This Belongs To Lionel Richie

Just as it would be brilliantly surreal to see a show overlooking the city on the leafy summit of Arthur's Seat on a clear summer's day, it could equally be that it doesn't quite work when the weather decides otherwise. And this being August in Edinburgh, the weather is temperamental. Barry Ferns will bravely be aiming to run this show every day of the festival, through sunshine and rain, though he understandably relies on an audience of at least 10 people. On better days, crowds of several hundred have congregated on the summit to enjoy his perfectly pitched 15-minute show. A clever concept that may sometimes surrender itself to rain, but on the right day will stir up a brilliant atmosphere.

Summit of Arthur's Seat, 3-27 Aug, 1.00pm

tw rating 3/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

Ferris Bueller's Way Of...

Dan Willis

Buying into the take away message from the 1986 film 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off', Dan Willis provides the audience with an overview of how following the titular character's mantra of embracing life from every angle has worked out for him. Willis's use of clips from the film to back-up his points helps to elucidate what we can learn from Ferris as well as providing a different way to engage the audience. However, those unfamiliar with the movie and its premise may at times feel slightly alienated and lost. A self-confessed computing geek, Willis naturally identifies with the film's nerdy character Cameron, and in many ways, he is indeed like him: affable and awkwardly funny but someone who may need a spark to try something different.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, 4-26 Aug, 5.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Christopher Rumbles]

Forget Therapy - Just Drink

Pauline Curtin

Setting the scene in a therapist's office, Pauline Curtin introduced a range of patients including a fortune teller and a sexually frustrated waif, but in a show which featured a diverse range of characters they remained unconvincing, blurring into one person because they had so few distinguishing features. Curtin started the show distractedly and didn't engage with her audience and therefore gags fell flat on their faces, and though she did generate amusing moments these were soon forgotten in amongst the shockingly bland material. A tired attempt to shock the audience by portraying a nun who longs for a more sensual life after being locked away from reality in a convent didn't have the desired effect. Forget seeing this show, just drink... lots.

Laughing Horse @ The Phoenix, 3-26 Aug, 3.15pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Khristine Gallagher]

Jim Smallman: Let's Be Friends

Best Medicine Management

Endearing 'Tattooligan' Jim Smallman is not just a comic who tells brilliant jokes, he is a heart-warming storyteller, and his experiences will have you captivated and laughing out loud. The theme of the show is self explanatory, really - Smallman is looking for a new best friend to go on man dates with - and fuels an up close and personal performance, featuring flip chart fun and witty observations; he tells some amazing stories about people in his life that mean a lot to him... and those who don't. I can't help thinking that Smallman will be one of the average-of-47 people that you like in the world, especially as he ends the show with a performance fit for the BRITs.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 4-26 Aug (not 14), 4.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Emma Obank]

Jo Caulfield - Thinking Bad Thoughts

Stand Comedy Club

Jo's feisty style of comedy is under way at the Fringe and she's taking no prisoners. In this slightly sinister but amusingly observational performance she's fed up with couples who don't shut up about who they met on holiday, men in their natural habitat, supermarket assistants, supermarket customers, an ignorant blind company and over-friendly passers by. The jokes are humorously insightful and her attitude loads up the laughs, but I felt just a couple of times that she was trying to be dark just for the sake of it. Nonetheless, she had most of the audience in stitches all the way through, and I would recommend this show to those of you who appreciate thoroughly cynical comedians.

The Stand Comedy Club, 4-26 Aug, 8.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Joe Mountford-Smith]

Karma Comedian

Stella Graham

If you have a moderately funny friend then perhaps spend some time with them rather than seeing Stella Graham's show, because whilst not technically a comedian, that friend would at least be funny. Meandering her way through unconnected stories, Graham sounded like a comedian and stood on stage just as a comedian would, yet unfortunately failed to say anything which went beyond being mildly amusing. Although the structure showed a lot of potential, the poor execution and lack of real content meant that this show fell short of what it could have been. Whilst I don't doubt that she has the ability to produce a much better show, this one is probably best avoided.

Laughing Horse @ Jekyll & Hyde, 3-26 Aug (not 16), 7.00pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Nicholas Jones]

Lucy Porter: People Person

Lucy Porter / The Stand Comedy Club

After a two year absence and giving birth twice in the same tax year, Lucy Porter is back with 'People Person', a show covering friendship, family and fame, and dealing with modern mid-life issues from daytime television to post-pregnancy pressures. Lucy has a very chatty and conversational style, which is both warm and engaging, setting the audience at ease and making them feel a sense of inclusion in her stories; and it seems especially appropriate for a show about relationships to build a strong rapport between the performer and the crowd. In her time away, Lucy's style has not changed; she continues to be clever, chatty and charming.

The Stand Comedy Club, 4-26 Aug, 5.30pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Conor Riordan]

THEATRE

Love Letters To The Public Transport System National

Theatre Of Scotland / Molly Taylor / The Stand Comedy Club

Synchronicity. It's an important concept in this captivating one-woman show, celebrating the way in which life can be simultaneously mundane and awe-inspiring. The narrative charts Molly Taylor's attempt to locate and thank the bus and train drivers who were responsible for delivering her to a particular place and time, but it encompasses much, much more. It meanders, like a number 86 bus, through the ways in which our lives can be affected so drastically by the actions of strangers. We rarely thank bus drivers, let alone get to know them, but by the end of this moving, funny tale you'll want to. I only wish we could have thanked the writer/performer, the way she thanks bus drivers. So: thanks, Molly!

The Assembly Rooms, 4-26 Aug (not 6, 13, 20), 6.15pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Remember Me

Teatro Sineglossa

There's a good reason this performance is staged in Summerhall's Black Tent.

Plunged into complete darkness, the senses are immediately placed on high alert, and an increased receptiveness to sound and brief fragments of light renders this captivating piece from Sineglossa all the more striking. A series of piercing whines stress the eardrums at first, but in the second half the performance truly comes into its own. Genders are stripped and fused as human figures moving in symbiotic rhythm flicker in distant mirrors. The effect is of standing in a rectangular dream-tunnel, as a mirage morphs and flashes in the middle distance. A powerful piece of theatre that projects the living body as art, this is both evocative and beautiful.

Summerhall, 3-6, 21-26 Aug, times vary.

tw rating 4/5 | [Colette M Talbot]

I, Tommy Red Aye Productions

We join Tommy Sheridan and Alan McCombes for a "typically Scottish afternoon of treachery, back-biting and betrayal" or, in other words, a fictionalised version of Tommy's rise to power and fall to 'Celebrity Big Brother'. Des McLean plays Tommy as a half buffoon, half messiah-like figure, but the dark Glaswegian humour does not prevent more serious notes from being sounded, as we contemplate the missed opportunity that was Sheridan's leadership of the SSP. While the audience of a certain age was chortling away, I plainly missed some of the references, and felt like I was attending the student play only to miss all the in-jokes. Perfectly conveys the insular and duplicitous nature of Scottish politics.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3-27 Aug (not 13), 3.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Lia Sanders]

Kin Donna Rutherford

Emotionally hard-hitting, 'Kin' is a thought provoking one-woman show, written and performed by the inspirational Donna Rutherford. Speaking about the trials and tribulations of middle aged people dealing with ageing parents, Rutherford acts as a "conduit" between the audience and her peers, who deliver on-screen monologues expressing detailed accounts of their emotional experiences. This is a raw piece of theatre, which cathartically tackles a subject, often considered taboo: family arguments, care homes and the inevitable passing away of relatives. The interviews are extremely real, and offer a sense of both personal and audience closure, leaving you thinking about your own family. There was not a dry eye in the house.

The Playhouse On The Fringe, 6-27 August (not 7, 14, 21), 2.00pm

tw rating 5/5 | [Emma Obank]

Mayday, Mayday

Theatre Damfino

It takes real skill for one actor to captivate an audience for an hour, yet Tristan Sturrock manages this with ease. His show tells the tale of how he tragically fell and broke his neck whilst returning home to his pregnant girlfriend from the local Mayday festivities, and it's a beautifully crafted performance. The simple staging and use of sound and lighting evoke not only the tranquillity of the Cornish seaside but also the chaotic confusion of A&E, enhancing the truly enthralling performance given by Sturrock himself, who perfectly portrays the sheer horror felt by a man who might not live to see his first born child, without ever letting it seem contrived or self-pitying. A superb story of tragedy and hope for the future.

Pleasance Dome, 2-27 Aug (not 13), 2.00pm

tw rating 4/5 | [Simon Thornton]

Proof February 30th Productions

A young company bringing a Pulitzer winning play about theoretical scientists to the Fringe is either an act of genius or insanity. The difference between the two is a key theme in David Auburn's remarkable tale of madness and mathematics, a complex piece given a lucid treatment here. The strong cast show an impressive attention to detail which makes every subtle motivation clear, even as they take evident pleasure in the comic potential embedded in the dialogue. Melis Aker particularly shines as central character Catherine, confidently portraying the conflicts of a woman whose life has been

lived in the shadow of her brilliant but mentally ill father. With their thoughtful, moving and ambitious production, February 30th have undoubtedly proven themselves.

theSpace on the Mile, 3-18 Aug (not 5, 12), 1.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Dave Farnoli]

Death Boogie

DDMcG Productions

"Obey, obey, obey... Consume." Vincent Spartan is a man stuck in the mundane. The limitations of 21st century life play out the same every day. But, after hearing of his brother's death fighting overseas, he fulfills his revolutionary dreams and follows him into combat. A comment on the absurd nature of martyrdom, self-sacrifice and the soul-crushing daily routine of a modern blue-collar worker, 'Death Boogie' is a poetic, hip-hop musical with a new angle. Complemented by a powerful and fluid musical score performed by The Mighty Third Rail, the show has the imagination and prowess of a West End show on the surface, whilst retaining harsh political tones at its core. A truly 21st century social commentary, infused with passion and energy.

Assembly Roxy, 5-27 Aug, 7.50pm

tw rating 4/5 | [James Valentine]

My Sister Scandal Theatre

This new American play follows two sisters and their escape from an abusive father and mother, and is good evidence that much free Fringe theatre is as worth seeing as the stuff you have to pay for. The premise is a little weak but, after a slow start, there is a long central section of engrossing drama. The twists at the end feel a bit like a slow wringing, but they're just about believable, while the production is coherent, and the direction uses an unusual space to the play's advantage. The script doesn't give the actors much to hold onto in terms of creating emotionally developed characters, and the acting suffers as a result, but this is certainly competent and energetically performed theatre.

The Fiddler's Elbow, 6-25 Aug, 2.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Thom May]

Request Programme

Cecilia Nilsson SIRIS Original Theatre

'Request Programme' is a one woman show in which the audience sit around Miss Rasch's living room and watch her carry out her evening activities, all of which are ordinary; there is no dialogue, and other than the radio show 'Request Programme', there is complete silence: as I settled into my uncomfortable stool, and realised what I was in for, my heart sank. However, within 10 minutes I was engrossed. 'Request Programme' is a complex and challenging piece of theatre that ultimately offers a sensitive and deeply moving portrait of a lonely woman, giving its audience an intimate look into the mind of a lost soul. The result is haunting, and the experience is unforgettable.

Inlingua Edinburgh, 4-19 Aug (not 6, 13), 7.30pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Olivia Lyth]

Mess

China Plate Presents Triggered@ Warwick, Commissioned by BAC, parabola Arts Centre

This performance doesn't just break down the fourth wall, it stampedes and tramples it to dust: the characters make continual, overlapping commentaries on the play they are putting together about Josephine's battle with anorexia, and just occasionally burst into song. All three actors are fantastic, creating funny, believable and oddly endearing personas. Josephine and Boris play off the tensions within and outside their play, while Sistahl (in charge of "the subtext") provides the music, sound effects and the occasional character from a corner of the stage. But for all the deliberate comedy of their self-conscious performance, the real problems of anorexia are never belittled. A play about an "issue", yes. But also about all issues, living life and theatre.

Traverse Theatre, 2-26 (not 6, 13, 20), times vary.

tw rating 5/5 | [Lia Sanders]

Tam O' Shanter Communicado / Horsecross Arts and Assembly

Director Gerry Mulgrew takes on the Bard's iconic tale, the result a riotous musical production that has spectators doubled up in laughter and blushing over the shameless antics of Burns' Ayshire lads and lassies. An exceptional live band provides fiddle-led ditties as an underscore to the drunken rabble's debauchery, while a redhead dancer wows the crowd with her creative talents, particularly during the famous Alloway Kirk scene. The classic story is interspersed with contemporary scenes and multimedia devices, bringing 21st century meaning to the 18th century poem, and in the absence of advanced special FX, the cast get resourceful, fastening together coats to create Tam's faithful mare, Nelly. A touching scene between Burns and his muse concludes ninety minutes of top-notch entertainment.

Assembly Hall, 2-26 Aug (not 8, 13, 20), 12.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Christy Brown]

The Day The Sky Turned Black

Ali Kennedy Scott / Direction - Adrian Barnes

The interweaving testimonies of four survivors of the February 2009 Australian bushfires structure the narrative of this one-woman show. Shifts between characters are relatively smooth, and these first-person perspectives work well in the telling. Scott delivers a sound performance, although certain characters - in particular that of a six-year-old boy - feel forced and overplayed. The play as a whole is fairly predictable, but what these anecdotes do successfully capture with poignancy and tact is the strength of the local communities of Victoria as they rebuilt their homes, and the goodwill expressed in the international response to the Black Saturday Bushfires. Though 'The Day The Sky Turned Black' delivers no surprises, it is well-structured, and treats its subject with great respect.

Assembly Roxy, 2-26 Aug (not 13), 3.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Colette M Talbot]

Unplugged Fine Chisel

Absolutely charming and bound to make you want to sing along and dance, Fine Chisel presents a dazzling array of theatre and music to immerse you into a fantastically enjoyable experience. Taking place at an open mic night at the legendary 'Bag o' Nails' pub, tensions rise as neurotic landlord Paul isn't in the mood for fun. Audience interaction seems amazingly natural, due to the bar setting, which adds to the convincing nature of the experience as the actors and talented musicians encourage foot stomping, sing-alongs and a song about a goldfish. Even the chaos of running a pub seems authentic, as a range of characters burst in at any moment to join in with the folk infused festivities...

Zoo Southside, 6-27 Aug, 5.45pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Khristine Gallagher]

ThreeWeeks

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