

ThreeWeeks EDINBURGH

Richard Tyrone Jones's Big Heart
A spoken word show about heart failure. But with jokes.
"Ringmaster of spoken word"
★★★★ Three Weeks
"fascinating, sobering, hilarious"
New Scientist
6pm to 25 August (not 19)
Banshee Labyrinth Cinema
Accessible Saturday matinee:
www.richardtyronejones.com

seeing double: FIGURES VISION
Edinburgh's first simultaneous face: two venues, two shows, two audiences linked by a live video stream.
Pleasance Courtyard, 11:30am
★★★★ The New Current
★★★★ Three Weeks
33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD

NICK PYNN
with Kate Daisy Grant
"Delightfully off-kilter"
The List
"Highly highly recommended"
5/5 ThreeWeeks
"A musical find"
The Scotsman
VENUE 258 - INLINGUA EDINBURGH

What is it like to be a real superhero?
MR. MILLENNIUM
One superhero. One super cabaret.
3-18 Aug (not Sun) @ 18:10, 20-25 Aug @ 19:10
SPACE
Surgeons' Hall (rsq)
www.thespaceuk.com

TIME: 22:30 MON TO SAT
ALL AN ACT
CLOWNS WITH ISSUES
7/5 POUNDS @SURGEONS HALL

CHILDREN'S

The Ugly Duckling

Kipper Tie Theatre With C Theatre

This is a bright, happy, eye catching and cheerful production- exactly what you'd want for a show for younger children. Their version of The Ugly Duckling takes the universally known children's story and adds a few patches of character development, some songs and a couple of new characters. It works very well, and includes a nice moral message about inner beauty, without letting the story become overly complicated. The jokes for grown-ups could be slightly jarring, occasionally distracting from metaphors that needed to be understood in order to fully enjoy a scene. But clever jokes are good in kids' plays, especially if they want to keep the adults interested, and here they certainly did. Aside from that it's pretty typical, but good fun.

C, Aug 1-26, 10.00am.
tw rating 5/5 | [Katherine Cunningham]

Monski Mouse's Baby Disco Dance Hall

Monski Mouse Media, Childrens Show

Picture a vintage circus tent fully kitted out for a disco for young children with comfy cushions, a big round dance floor and circus themed decorations; this is what you get at 'Monski Mouse's Baby Disco', and first impressions were therefore very positive. The simple idea, a children's disco in a tent which welcomes everyone, creates a unique atmosphere and allows friends, parents, carers, grandparents (you name it) to join together by dancing, enjoying the music and relaxing. The friendly hostess-cum-DJ is clad in a 1950's polka dot dress, and introduces some classic disco hits, playing the likes of 'Dancing Queen' and 'ABC'. My initial positive impressions were completely borne out by this very successful event.

Assembly George Square, 3-12, 18-19 and 25-26 Aug, 11.00am
tw star rating 4/5 | [Bethanie Pochin]

Mr Snot Bottom's Stinky Silly Show

The title of 'Mr Snot Bottom's Stinky Silly Show' should give you a fairly good idea of the content of this gross-out comedy show for kids. Energetic Mr Snot Bottom (Australian Mark Trenwith) took us on a tour of his house; introduced his friend Phlegm and told some stories, all riddled with jokes about bums, poo and snot. Trenwith did struggle somewhat with a young audience who often veered between shy apathy and inquisitive heckling, and there were a few uncomfortable bits of gender stereotyping (apparently dads never change nappies). However, the regular quiet giggles suggested that with a slightly louder audience, this could be a fun show for



SNAP OF THE DAY: Keeping it smart casual on the Mile, David Mills, who can also be found at the Alternative Fringe at The Hive. Photo: Kat Gollock

fans of toilet humour and their strong-stomached parents.
Gilded Balloon Teviot, 1-26 Aug (not 13, 20, 21, 22), 11.00am. tw rating 2/5 | [Holly Close]

COMEDY

The Cradle Of Comedy

Firebreak Productions

Do people in the Middle East laugh? Of course! This fascinating documentary refuses to dwell on the turbulence that has dominated the Middle East in recent times. Rather it highlights how tragedy, in time, can provide the perfect comic material. This is revealed through interviews with six Middle-Eastern comedians, alongside many hilarious highlights from their live performances. Lebanon and Pakistan, amongst other places, are shown without the lens of war, normality is depicted. Driving lanes are joked about as merely a "suggestion". Sound anything like Italy? This highly accessible and intriguing film acts as a platform for these six Middle-Eastern comedians to dispel stereotypes and relate to the rest of the world through the universal language of comedy.

Hill Street Theatre, 7-26 Aug, 12.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Alice Taylor]

Vikki Stone: Hot Mess

Corrie McGuire For Objective Talent

This woman is wonderful: from the very first minute her bubbly character shines

and she immediately makes herself endearing. The time seems to fly by - in fact, you may feel a bit cheated that the hour seems to be over so quickly - with anecdotes, a piano, songs, Deal Or No Deal, and shoulder pads featuring heavily. A vague knowledge of TV helps but is not entirely necessary, as she takes us on a tour round her favourite celebrities, dwelling on Phillip Schofield in all his silver-haired glory. The only negative was her choice of audience helper, who didn't seem too happy being drafted on-stage. If you're one of these people who are under the illusion that women aren't funny, go see Vikki Stone and you'll change your mind: she's funny, fabulous and female.
Underbelly Bristo Square, 1-26 Aug (not 14), 8.10pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Claire Hoyda]

Sarah Kendall - Get Up, Stand Up

Mick Perrin for Just For Laughs Live

A superb show that promotes standing up for oneself, in which Sarah Kendall's dark imagination delivers a seamless mix of observations, storytelling, and anecdotes. Not one to kowtow to anyone, Kendall opens with a dig at her peers' posters, explaining that the reason the world still awaits a cure for cancer must simply be because all the "geniuses" are doing stand-up and sketch shows. Kendall excels as a raconteur, which is why the climax of her show, a re-imagining of 'The Ugly Duckling', provides the greatest source of laughter. Displaying a wonderful sense of comedic timing, Kendall supplements

this by making good use of her ham acting skills to emulate hero Ryan O'Neal. Creative, lively, and perspicacious, it is hard to find fault in this show.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug, 8.30pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Christopher Rumbles]

Gareth Morinan: Truth Doodler

Gareth Morinan

Morinan's show is part PowerPoint presentation; part stand-up and part character comedy. He is likeable and involves the audience in a non-threatening manner, making engagement with sketches relaxed and fun. The best moments come from his animations and pre-recorded videos, which are well produced and get the biggest laughs, though there aren't quite enough moments where the audience were really laughing. His topics range from a lighthearted look at centipedes on speed to David Cameron, and it is obvious that Morinan is disillusioned with UK politics. Perhaps a bit too nervous on stage, he needs to tighten his act and draw a line under dragged out jokes. Despite this, his production presents real promise and could be something really special in the future.

Underbelly, 1-26 (not 14) Aug, 1.30pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Conor Riordan]

Baby Wants Candy

Assembly with Marshall Cordell

Baby Wants Candy is undoubtedly a candidate for best improvised musical at the festival; it will take your breath **cont**

JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST
Free at all 10:30 performances
Going Green the Wong Way
4 - 18 Aug (not 6 or 13)
CALARTS Festival Theater
VENUE 13 Lochend Close
100m past Cannongate Kirk
JOIN US FOR TEA
On the Venue13 lawn at 15:30
Free with a same day ticket
4 - 18 Aug (not 6 or 13)

★★★★ BroadwayBaby.com
London Gay Men's Chorus Ensemble
Hi-de-Homo!
12-18 Aug at 7.35pm
venue 34
ADAM HOUSE
CHAMBERS STREET
0845 260 1234
www.CtheFestival.com

JONNY-&-THE BAPTISTS
★★★★ 'Genius' Exeunt Magazine
★★★★ 'Awesome' Fringe Biscuit
★★★★ 'Foot-tapping' Broadway Baby
★★★★ 'Wild, raw energy... fieriness & heart' The List
★★★★ 'Hilarious. It rarely gets better than this' Ed Fest
The hit debut act! Underbelly, 9.10pm

cont> away. Last night's instalment, 'Chariots of Fur', was greeted by rapturous applause, especially when several performers climbed through the audience mid-song. Although completely improvised, the show was packed with show-stopping numbers that wouldn't look out of place on Broadway, complete with spine-chilling harmonies and upbeat dancing. These exceptionally talented improvisers are quadruple threats: able to sing, act, dance and provide witty comebacks. All five performers trained at renowned improv theatres in the States, so 'Baby Wants Candy' offers the best of the best; thank goodness they're back once again to spread the gospel of the art of improvised musical comedy.

Assembly George Square, 1-27 Aug, 7.30pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Emma Obank]

Brendon Burns – Home Stretch Baby

After arriving on stage to bright lights and the sound of pounding rock music, Brendon Burns calls himself a middle-aged ex-rock-star, in a show which focuses on how, at age forty, the partying, hard-living days are behind him. Burns is one of the best storytellers you will see; pacing loudly around the stage and gesticulating madly, he has the audience in the palm of his hand. His stories flow, his language is very eloquent, and he also offers some genuinely sentimental moments. But, there isn't time to get too mushy, as his frank and honest opinions on everything from his father's new wife to Masterchef are belly-shakingly funny. Middle-aged perhaps, but certainly still a bit of a rock-star.

Pleasance Dome, 3-22 August (not 14), 10.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Anna McDonald]

Damien Crow: The World According to Damien Crow The Assembly Rooms

Chris Forbes' alter ego Damien Crow is, like so many of today's goths, entitled, spoilt and full of an angst that he isn't quite sure what to do with. Thankfully, he seems to know a bit about comedy (and playing the accordion). Those with even a little awareness of the trials and tribulations of the modern goth will find this familiar, perhaps enlightening and often hilarious. The show has a steady pace from the outset, however, the highlight arrives with the introduction of a sidekick and two accordions, an instrument that is unfairly underutilised in comedy circles. Anyone curious about those shifty-looking teenagers brooding in town centres should delve into The World According to Damien Crow.

The Assembly Rooms, 1-31 Aug, 4.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [David O'Connor]

Dave McNeill: Canoe Ride 3000 Feature Spot Productions Ltd

Dave McNeill's first solo show is a character comedy about one man's journey to China in a canoe and his attempts to take down the oppressive regime. The plot is insane, but it's supposed to be. If you can imagine a reenactment of Robin Hood, conspiracies about computers controlling the world, and a fictional history of the world, then you'll have a vague idea of what is covered. The jokes may not be the cleverest, but the delivery is. An energetic performer, McNeill covers the stage like a madman on a mission, so you might want to avoid it if you have an aversion to the sight of a man excessively perspiring. Try not to be put off, though; it's strangely wonderful to watch a madman going upstream without a paddle in a cardboard canoe.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-26 Aug (not 14), 3.30pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Conor Riordan]

Dissecting Comedy

Mags Woodward and Adam Russell / Laughing Horse Free Festival

This was a very casual affair, the open window providing a gentle backing track made up of light pub garden chatter whilst the amiable pair of performers did their stuff. There were few defined jokes but the charming atmosphere involved the

audience well and ensured that everyone in attendance was at least in a good mood. Taking us through the events of previous shows and various tales from their lives, this former couple had an excellent chemistry which resulted in a very intimate mood. Whilst you won't be blown away if you see this show, you'll almost certainly have a lovely time and could well learn a useful perianal fact.

Laughing Horse @ Counting House, 2-26 Aug, 4.45pm
tw rating 3/5 | [Nicholas Jones]

Helen Arney – Voice Of An Angle MZA And HAP

I wish Helen Arney had been my science teacher at school. Her jaunty, quirky songs about cryogenics, nuclear physics and zoology, performed on a ukulele, would have made those tedious and perplexing double periods captivating and comprehensible. One problem with musical comedy acts at the Fringe is that many do not have the vocal talents to match their witty lyricism, but fortunately, Arney has an excellent pair of lungs, and belted out her factually accurate choruses with confidence and control. I would recommend this show to any adult, regardless of their academic background, if they want to be entertained and informed in equal measure. I do not have a degree in chemical engineering, but I left the auditorium in my element.

Underbelly Cowgate, 2-26 Aug (not 15), 6.15pm
tw rating 4/5 | [Joseph Fleming]

Helen Keen: Robot Woman Of Tomorrow Avalon Promotions

The Robot Woman of Tomorrow is perfect for the audience of today. As geek chic rises to new heights, Helen Keen reminds us of its roots and speculates as to its destination in this highly intelligent, accessible stand-up. From sex robots to the failings of a flannel as a method of everyday cleansing, this weird and wonderful show has something for everyone, nerds and the hitherto unconverted. Keen's frank yet sweet delivery charms the crowd, and some non-intimidating audience participation is mixed with some very original and entertaining visuals (best not to ruin the surprise on that one) to stunning effect. I can't confidently predict hover-cars or empathic androids, but I can predict Helen Keen's success.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-26 Aug, 3.30pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Jessamine McHugh]

Jim Smallman's Group Therapy Best Medicine Management

"Sometimes this show has a semblance of a format, today it's just four comedians telling silly stories," admits Jim Smallman. I'm alright with that. The amiable Smallman and his three friends Nick Page, Joanna Sutherland and Jessica Fostekew sit around bantering between themselves and with the audience. Ostensibly they're solving problems, but really they're just making us and themselves laugh, like an hour of an unscripted TV panel show. Of course there are stories that don't pay off, but when the performers are obviously enjoying themselves and the hit rate is so high, it's easy to shrug off the odd weak gag. An enjoyable hour of banter, just remember to think up some real problems in case they actually stick to the format!

Just The Tonic at The Tron, 2-26 Aug (not 14), 1.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Bell]

Naz Osmanoglu: Ottoman Without An Empire Avalon Promotions

His confidence is booming and his hat is massive, what more do you want? Naz Osmanoglu - one of the acclaimed WitTank trio - jokes about his Turkish roots, his father and a certificate he's particularly proud of. The audience clearly love this guy - they're laughing from start to finish, regardless of whether the jokes are cuttlingly insightful or well delivered. Perhaps it's his way of exaggerating words in a sinister tone of voice, which happens almost as often as he mentions that his dad is an angry man. A couple of great gags about what it's like being a kid and the futility of the gym really got me going. If you like observational comedy, you'll

probably find him a Turkish delight.

Underbelly Bristo Square, 1-26 Aug, 8.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Joe Mountford-Smith]

Not Treasure Island Sleeping Trees

Thar be treasure in them thar caves! I'm initially doubtful as over-the-top physical comedy and "Arrr Jim Lad" pirate voices prevail. But the dramatic pace is fast aided by Wayne's World-style transitions through imaginative characters and scenes, where the talented trio from 'Sleeping Trees' exuberantly display their rapport, timing, movement and range of accents. Feisty improv caused a hilarity overload, holding the audience captive and forcing them to walk the plank of abandon. The hilarious 'Not' Jolly Roger character shivered me timbers (actual tears) with his lackadaisical inflection and disregard for Jim (who incidentally resembles Rhys Darby's lovechild in a tropical vest). These spirited performers don't need rum to keep us entertained, barrel load or otherwise.

Just The Tonic At The Caves, 2-26 Aug (not 14), 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Mara Docherty]

One Rogue Reporter

Rich Peppiatt / Something for the Weekend

Make sure you see this show before Rich Peppiatt is buried too deeply in lawsuits. An extremely brave ex-Daily Star reporter, he gallantly strives to expose the real truth of tabloid journalism. He's taking control here, turning the tables on the editors of publications like The Sun, The Guardian, and the Daily Star. The deeply ingrained corruption of the media is not news to most in the wake of the Leveson inquiry, but with the quintessential flair of a tabloid journalist Peppiatt gives us an eye-opening hour of never before seen footage, including some of his own hilarious investigations. 'One Rogue Reporter' is all we need to really understand the (allegedly - lawyers take note) abysmal behaviour of some of today's media leaders.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug, 5.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Ellie Willis]

Patrick Monahan - Shooting From The Lip!

Phil McIntyre Entertainments By Arrangement With Vivien Smith Management

Award winning comedian Patrick Monahan returns to the Edinburgh Fringe to prove why he's still the under-appreciated stand-up act to beat. As ever, his show has no real agenda, relying a lot on his masterful ability to interact with an audience. It's hard not to warm to the half-Iranian, half-Irish, Teesside funny man as he effortlessly manoeuvres between his own tales and the crowd's banter. It's a true pleasure to watch someone who clearly loves what they do, and do it with such excellence. Monahan possesses the rare ability to be hilarious without being outrageous, offering gentle fun comedy, though of course with some saucy bits... Patrick Monahan is a staple of the Edinburgh fringe diet.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 1-27 Aug (not 14), 8.20pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Simon Thornton]

Gerry Howell: Glorious Invention PBH's Free Fringe

A winner of the 2010 Buxton Fringe Award for Best Individual Comedy Show, in Edinburgh Gerry Howell offers a stand-up comedy show that won't hurt your wallet and which he describes as a "wordy performance", with readings of extracts from uninspiring stories he has written. His intention is to get through them without making any puns, and at least in this he was successful. But un-punny after un-punny story soon became rather monotonous and dull, causing a few audience members to drift off to sleep... presumably he also aimed to amuse and entertain, and this is where he fell short. While the direct communication with the audience was rather enjoyable, the majority of the show felt rambling and not so glorious after all.

Bannermans, 8-24 Aug (not 14, 18), 4.15pm
tw rating 3/5 | [Emma Obank]

THEATRE

Gilbert And Sullivan In Brief(s) Ingenious Paradox/Nick Brooke Productions/Pleasance Theatre Trust

This show combines comedy, theatre and opera as a charismatic foursome attempt to condense the 14 operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan into 70 minutes, or before they bite each other's heads off. There's a lot going on here with frivolous props and baffling storylines, and I eventually found myself absent-mindedly enjoying the singing without really paying attention to the abridged plots. When the foursome are not singing, the show is more overtly comic, with witty asides and comedic fall-outs about who should play which role. The slapstick acting occasionally seems forced but the heavenly singing and scintillating musical compositions redeem it. The opera in this show is worth your time, but its combination with garish stage-play makes it hard to keep up with.

Pleasance Courtyard, 2-27 Aug (not 13, 21), 4.30pm
tw rating 3/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

Killing Time

Edinburgh University Theatre Company

In exactly one hour the world will end, and the audience is along for the ride as we watch two teenage boys discussing those pressing subjects that need to be covered before armageddon: foreskins, losing their virginities and those all-important vital statistics. In this surprisingly moving meditation on how people cope with impending death, both Callum O'Dwyer and Joe McArdle excel as adolescents whose whole world may have changed, but who still approach everything with the same laddish humour. The friendship between the two boys is beautifully acted and Amy Plender is also very good as a young girl trying to take control of her situation. Both funny and touching, this well-written, stripped-back piece is oddly uplifting.

Bedlam Theatre, 3-25 Aug, times vary.
tw rating 4/5 | [Charlotte Ryan]

Looby Loo (No Strings Attached)

New Apollo Theatre Company

Andy Pandy and Looby Loo from 'Watch with Mother' are all grown up in this bizarre piece. Starting as a nostalgic walk down memory lane for older members of the audience, the story quickly lost its way, and while as a comedy it may have worked, it just didn't have the emotional potential to feel genuinely tragic. A slow and lacklustre plot with brief comedic moments, wooden acting and a horribly depressing ending make this one to avoid, even despite Eddi Hill's brilliant turn as 'Auntie', which brought some much-needed humour, but it wasn't enough to save this production. If you were a fan of the original children's programme avoid this dark and unsatisfying re-imagining. Enough to give kids nightmares.

C nova, 4-19 Aug, 9.05pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Charlotte Ryan]

Mark Thomas: Bravo Figaro!

Phil McIntyre Entertainment Ltd

Mark Thomas relates to us the story of his dad, a rough, hard-grafting, working class builder who likes to listen to opera while he goes about his duties. The act is comic genius, but don't watch it if you simply want a hilarious routine: this story is at times harrowing and deeply sad, and nothing is held back. Mark Thomas is both down to earth and sympathetic as he tells his story, keeping the audience engaged and laughing. Featuring interviews with members of Thomas's family and an effective stage set-up, this tale is tied together with a few surprising twists and turns hidden among the hilarity. A must see that stays in your head for days after you've seen it.

Traverse Theatre, 3-26 Aug (not 13, 20), times vary.

tw rating 4/5 | [Lauren Houghton]

And The Girls In Their Sunday Dresses The Market Theatre And Assembly

Part of the Assembly's South African Season, 'And the Girls In Their Sunday Dresses' is a thoughtful and provocative work that captures the thoughts of two women waiting for bags of rice to be distributed from a government building. Given that "the wings of government move very slowly", we have time to share many intimate moments with these characters, as they waver between the courses of passivity and action in the face of soul-destroying bureaucracy and corruption. In an echo of 'Waiting for Godot', the act of waiting overshadows the idea of the goal, and here a solitary chair acquires much symbolism. Both comic and touching, this is a resplendent performance - from two outstanding actors - that is truly commendable.

Assembly George Square, 1-27 Aug (not 13), 1.30pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Colette M Talbot]

Bitch Boxer

Snuffbox Theatre

No need to be a sports fan to enjoy the tour de force that is 'Bitch Boxer'; this funny and touching one-woman show is not only the story of a young girl's struggle to prove herself, but at its core is a poignant and beautifully restrained tale about grief and loss. Writer/performer Charlotte Josephine has incredible talent, perfectly inhabiting every facet of this character, from the steely and determined athlete to the young dorky girl in love. That's not to mention the sheer physicality she brings to the role; by the end there is steam literally rolling off her from under the hot stage lights. 'Bitch Boxer' is a wonderful and resounding triumph, totally unmissable.

Underbelly Cowgate, 2-26 Aug (not 14) 4.00pm
tw rating 5/5 | [Patricia-Ann Young]

Big Bite-Size Breakfast Show White Room Theatre

Coissants and strawberries kick off this early-morning delight. With White Room Theatre's morning entertainment menu running on a rotation throughout the Festival, today we are treated to four short theatre pieces with a 1940s theme. There is a good mix of styles and storylines, from the brilliantly comedic performance of the first piece in which a modern day couple's obsession with the 1940s is causing their marriage to suffer, to the captivating true story of Hedy Lamarr, Hollywood star and inventor. Eve Kagan, as Hedy, is the definite star of the show, enthraling the audience with her dramatic monologue. With songs, laughs and flashes of genuine talent, this is the perfect way to start your day.

Pleasance Dome, 1-26 Aug (not 14, 21), 10.30am
tw rating 3/5 | [Charlotte Ryan]

Bullet Catch

The Arches Presents Rob Drummond

This one is definitely loaded. Cool, clever and existential, 'Bullet Catch' is a part-magic show, part-history lesson that explores big questions through initially small acts of illusion. Writer and performer Rob Drummond has a talent for tricks and is compelling in his shy, diffident, nice-guy persona. He is skillful at creating a relaxed environment when a trick calls for it, but is also able to build tension and drama as the show gains its heart-racing momentum. 'Bullet Catch' is about the big questions of life - who we are, why we're here, what we should do about it - but it is also funny, tense and thrilling.

Traverse Theatre, 2-26 Aug (not 3, 6, 13, 20), times vary.

tw rating 5/5 | [Roze Tuplin]

ThreeWeeks

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Published by ThreeWeeks Publishing a division of UnLimited Media, 221 Shoreditch High Street, London, E1 6PJ

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