

ThreeWeeks EDINBURGH

So little of what could happen does happen...



Hill Street Theatre
Master's Room
10.30am

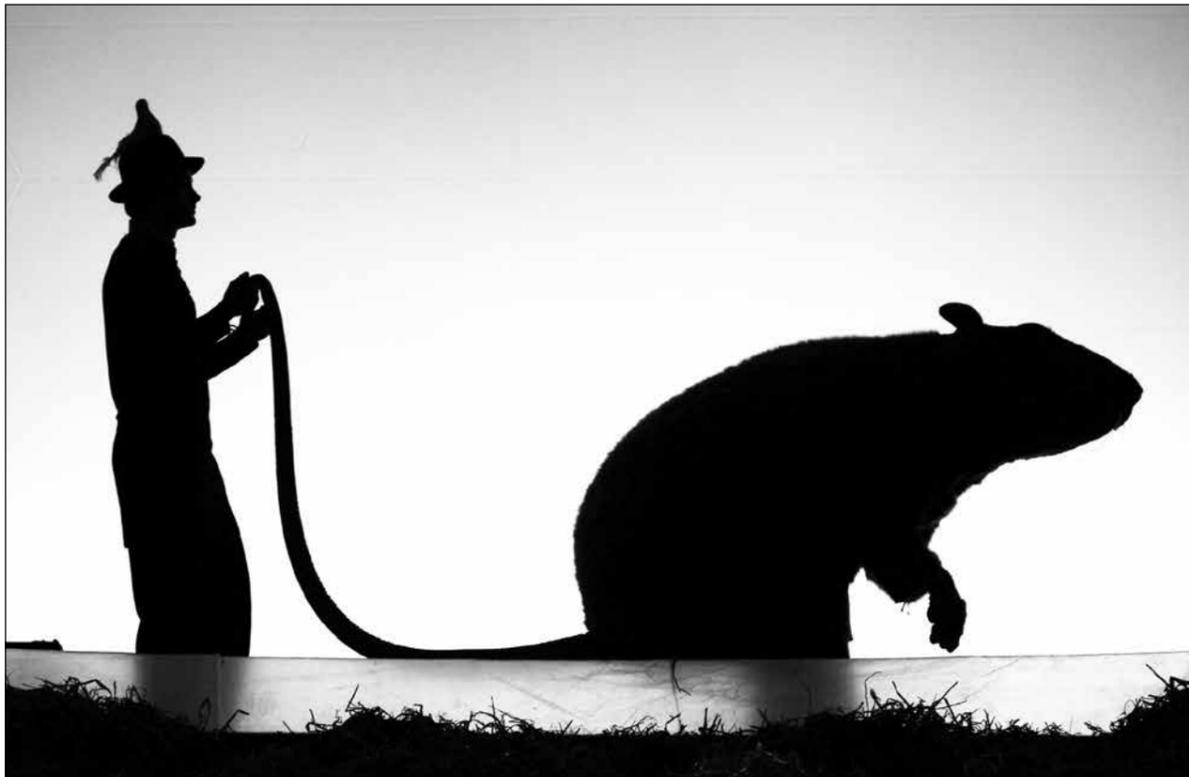
BABY HINCE

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

The I Hate Children Children's Show Unusual Productions

Exuding raw imagination, magician Paul Nathan and his buddy, John Anaya, bring back to the Fringe their world of astounding music and magic with a splash of attitude. Nathan is hilariously condescending, sarcastically shouting "yay!" as he performs magic tricks with flawless execution and sadistic wit. With every adorable child involved, Nathan amazes with a range of entertainment such as wow-inducing illusions and balloon animals: he can even make dog-cheetahs. Well, kind of. Even sceptical kids are hushed and kept entertained as Nathan sharply delivers his deadpan wit. Leaving audiences wide-eyed with wonder without the forced cheesy optimism that usually accompanies children's entertainment, Nathan juggles around a world of child-hating fun infused with magical illusions.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug, 12.15pm
tw rating 5/5 | [Khristine Gallagher]



seeing double: FIGURES VISION

Edinburgh's first simultaneous farce: two venues, two shows, two audiences linked by a live video stream.
Pleasance Courtyard, 11:30am

★★★★★ The New Current
★★★★★ Three Weeks

33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD

COMEDY

Stinky Show Hitch And Mitch / PBH's Free Fringe

Even by the standards of sketch comedy, the 'Stinky Show' is spectacularly hit and miss. Richard Hanrahan and Adam Mitchell lead off with a couple of sketches that tank horribly - the Twitter sketch isn't funny to begin with and gets worse as it goes on - followed by some bumbling self-referential stuff which even references that it's self-referential, but fails to include jokes. Then, apparently from nowhere, they produce a second half of sublimely surreal brilliance. The weird, audience participation 'Blind Date' show segues into a grimly hilarious execution scene involving Hitch, a folding chair and a teddy. Like their material, Hitch and Mitch are destined either for stratospheric success or abject failure, but nothing in between.

The Banshee Labyrinth, 4-25 Aug (not 14), 7.15pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Andrew Bell]

Things We Did Before Reality Will Franken

In Things We Did Before Reality, Will Franken has more personalities than a bunch of schizophrenic triplets. Whether a lewd preacher, cockney prostitute or sexually disabled unfortunate, each voice is well presented and uniquely characterised, merging together into a surreal but strangely succinct theatrical concoction. Part character comedy, part one-man sketch show, Franken is an arresting and devastating stage presence; any social commentary (and I think there may have been) is disguised by the absurdity of his narrations, leading the viewer to work their own interpretations into this bizarre cocktail. Strange, sometimes awkward, often

SNAP OF THE DAY: Radu Stanca National Theatre of Sibiu, Romania took to the EIF stage this weekend with their take on 'Gulliver's Travels' Photo: Paul Collins

funny and always interesting, Franken's act is like Marmite - fucking awesome - and deserves an audience as big as his character roster.

Just The Tonic at The Caves, 2-26 Aug (not 14), 10.35pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Joseph Trotter]

Derek Ryan: Time Lord - Free

Is it possible to turn back the clock? Does evolution make mistakes? Will time ever run out? These are questions most of us will think about late at night after a few too many drinks; but it's unlikely that anyone has made them quite so hilarious before. Derek Ryan brought his new material to the Fringe to "workshop", yet he makes it hard to believe that there was ever anything wrong with it. He divulges how to slow time down; examines the evils of the snooze button and discusses how times have changed with technology and slang. Highly amusing from start to finish, the comedian plots the demise of the clock and concludes, "when life is good, you barely ever look at your watch".

Laughing Horse @ Captain Taylor's Coffee House, 2-26 Aug (not 13, 21), 8.00pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Hannah Sweetnam]

Thom Tuck Flips Out

Thom Tuck/SO Comedy

The cravat-wearing, stupendously debonair Thom Tuck can hardly put a foot wrong. One-third of dearly beloved sketch troupe The Penny Dreadfuls, and a deserving nominee of Foster's Best

Newcomer Award after his sensational solo show last year, Tuck is one of the Fringe's consistently magnificent performers. Luckily, despite its crazed title, '...Flips Out' did not represent a sudden, negative slip in condition, but rather a positive alteration in structure. Whereas Tuck's debut hour was unerringly focussed on one major project, its confident successor was thrillingly unconstrained, darting from one brilliant observation to another with only minor connections between each. Tuck was clearly revelling in the creative freedom that the change provided, and the audience were in fits of laughter throughout.

Pleasance Dome, 1-27 Aug (not 12), 8.10pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Joseph Fleming]

Trevor Noah: The Racist

Mick Perrin for Just For Laughs Live And Eddie Izzard

Born to a black South African mother and white Swiss-German father during the apartheid years, Trevor Noah invites us on his journey of his struggle to find an identity. His strength lies in his storytelling ability; he conveys his tales with thoughtfulness, and inspires great amusement as he approaches the overarching issue of race. Noah is clearly a very intelligent guy, just hearing him glide in and out of languages and accents to the delight of the crowd is an indication, so it was a bit of a shame that he occasionally resorted to clichéd cultural stereotypes. These moments, however, were few and far between, and overall Noah's debut

show displays the attributes of a stellar stand-up comic.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug (not 6, 7, 13)
7.15pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Simon Thornton]

Erich McElroy: The Brit Identity Bound And Gagged Comedy

Queuing. Sycophantically apologizing when someone bumps into you. Rambling on about the war. Erich McElroy is here to explore all of these renowned British stereotypes. The Brit Identity is a charming concept, and will have you laughing at yourself and your national idiosyncrasies, though McElroy is more than willing to make fun of his homeland too. An American by birth, but British at heart, McElroy passed the British citizenship test four years ago. He loves mocking us jolly brits; and explores many bizarre British traditions such as Guy Fawkes Night. This show will have you giggling all the way through as it focuses on what we love to do the most: take the piss.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug, 4.45pm.
tw rating: 4/5 | [Emma Obank]

Funk Rocket 5000

Feeling sad? You'll probably feel worse after this show. Energetic but professionally failing Dr Benoit attempts to make Rachel, a seemingly incurable patient, happy. A predictably futile effort. Rachel's gloomy and unresponsive attitude to Dr Benoit's attempts at therapy are quite funny at first, but it loses its impact pretty quickly, leaving the cont-

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

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NOT MY CUP OF TEA

Not my cup of tea

3pm

theSpace on the Mile

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★★★★FringeGuru: ★★★★★Broadway Baby



'Infectious enthusiasm...'
★★★★ ThreeWeeks

C theatre

Giddy Goat

1-27 Aug at 12.15pm

Cvenue 34
ADAM HOUSE
CHAMBERS STREET
0845 260 1234
www.CtheFestival.com



★★★★ BroadwayBaby.com

London Gay Men's Chorus Ensemble

Hi-de-Homo!

12-18 Aug at 7.35pm

Cvenue 34
ADAM HOUSE
CHAMBERS STREET
0845 260 1234
www.CtheFestival.com

JONNY-&-THE BAPTISTS

★★★★★ 'Awesome' Fringe Biscuit
★★★★★ 'Hilarious' Remote Goat
★★★★★ 'Genius' Exeunt
★★★★★ 'Foot-tapping' Broadway Baby
★★★★★ 'Wild, raw... fiercest & heart' The List

The hit debut act! Underbelly, 9.10pm

cont> rest of the show going round in dull circles. There are a few odd giggles, but it's really Rachel's fantastic guitar playing paired with Dr Benoit's pleasant singing voice, that saved the show from utter disaster. Nevertheless, just like Rachel, the audience is left unable to produce anything more than an artificial, strained grimace. I'm afraid the happiness therapy failed both Rachel and the audience.

Just the Tonic at The Caves, 2-26 Aug (not 14), 12.55pm. tw rating 2/5 | [Alice Taylor]

Jigsaw: Gettin' Jiggy

Avalon Promotions

A sketch-troupe consisting of three stand-up comedians - Dan Antopolski, Nat Luurtsema and Tom Craine - Jigsaw return to Edinburgh with a show of innovative and inventive skits. The whole performance is exceptionally tight, fast-paced and crammed with entertaining material; it was hard to believe that the full hour was up by the end. Particularly hilarious were the running gags, with one about a man seeking IVF never failing to have the audience in hysterics. My only minor criticism is that Luurtsema often felt like an accessory in many of the sketches and should have had a more prominent role. However, it's clear to see why this trio are rising stars in the comedy world, having already been picked up by BBC television and radio. This Jigsaw fits together perfectly.

Pleasance Courtyard, Aug 1-27, 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Simon Thornton]

John Robertson: The Old Whore The Fear Corporation

"Australia is a late-term abortion masquerading as a tourist destination." Even when speaking about his mother country, brilliantly funny Aussie comic John Robertson doesn't pull any punches. In fact, in this hour of hilariously bizarre comedy, that's probably the least offensive thing he says. Robertson sets up his gags so cleverly that you never really know where he's going until smack! you've arrived in the centre of his unpredictable comedy whirlwind. From discovering he was a racist to breaking the ice at a relative's deathbed, the material makes this a must-see, if only to tell your friends you've met the guy who "slept with Queen Elizabeth" and then engaged in a "sword-fight" with Prince Charles!

Assembly Hall, 1-26 Aug, 10.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Charlotte Ryan]

Lead Pencil Lead Pencil Comedy Group / PBH's Free Fringe

Doing their first run at the Fringe, Lead Pencil's self-titled sketch show is a smart and likeable debut. The trio - Maddie Rice, Greg Simpson and Louise Beresford Carter - are all strong performers, with Rice and Carter's sassy take on the Middleton sisters being a major highlight. The use of stylised cardboard props is a nice touch, though they do seem a little redundant in some sketches, and lead to a lot of unnecessary messing around. There are a few very well-written segments, like their reinterpretation of Adele's 'Someone Like You', but many of the jokes feel underdeveloped. However, with a bit more work on the script, Lead Pencil could really start drawing in the crowds.

The Fiddler's Elbow, 13-25 Aug, 4.30pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Holly Close]

Otto Kuhnle: Ich Bin Ein Berliner IMWP And Otto Kuhnle

If you think that an hour of watching a German stand-up playing a flute with his trousers around his ankles before dancing with a brush sounds like hell, I'd agree with you. Yet, somehow, Otto Kuhnle makes it work. Maybe it's the accordion music, or the endearingly adequate gags, or just the utter daftness of the finale, but something about this show just clicks. It's very Fringe - there is yodelling involved, after all - but it's all good, clean fun. The gnome sequence lags a little and is probably the least entertaining patch, but the leaf blower bottle trick more than makes up for it. This is a very odd, very Germanic show, but also a surprisingly entertaining one.

Assembly George Square, 2 - 26 (not 14), 4.40pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Bell]

Ed Eales-White: Champions Whitebone Productions

Quirkiness, wit and a sort of endearing awkwardness, this one-man show had it all. Ed Eales-Whites' character sketch show is an original, featuring English stereotypes with a difference. There's the creepy guy who kills the laughter in a pub conversation by revealing his strange obsessions; a pompous, artsy writer who has written a nonsense play about vultures and a poem-writing pigeon. Weird, but surprisingly wonderful. He keeps it creative by mixing things up, coming up with strange, unexpected punch lines and inevitably, some slightly uncomfortable audience involvement. Probably because of its peculiarity, the show received a mixed audience reaction, but it suited my sense of humour perfectly, and I was giggling throughout.

Pleasance Courtyard, Aug 1-27 (not 13), 5.45pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Grace Hardy]

MUSICALS and OPERA

Part A
BottleTop Theatre Company
As it opens with a number called 'Beer Goggles', you're immediately glad that you didn't bring your grandparents to Bottle Top Theatre Company's show. They use a musical revue format to portray scenes which are all too familiar to the youth of today: drunken phone calls to an ex, bad conversations at house parties and embarrassing moves on the dance floor. These characters are cringe-worthy in every sense of the word, but it's a different story for the actors, whose beautiful harmonies, clear projection and stage presence held the audience rapt. This six-piece ensemble deserved all the whooping and cheering they got from the audience; if this is Part A, when can we expect the next instalment?
theSpace @ Surgeons' Hall, 13-25 Aug, 8.25pm tw rating 5/5 | [Lucinda Al-Zoghbi]

Princess Pyunggang Bibimbam Theatre

As soon as the smoke machines fired up I knew what I was in for: an hour-long, unimaginative folk fairytale where a princess falls in love with a pauper. Each role was horrendously overacted and the vocals were painfully strained and strangled, as the actors struggled to find their assigned harmonies. The dancing was even worse, and looked like it had been choreographed in a dance arcade. Several audience members fell asleep during the performance, but probably felt compelled to stay due to the ticket price. The finale provided a little entertainment, as the Korean taiko drumming was impressive, yet the rest of the performance wouldn't have been fit for a high school drama production.

Paradise in Augustines, 14-27 Aug, 5.20pm tw rating: 2/5 | [Emma Obank]

The Wind In The Willows Yvonne Arnaud Theatre

Thinking about it, a selfish, ex-con aristocrat might seem an odd hero to present to children. There is a contrast between the Edwardian gentlemen types and the communist Wild Wooders, and this became apparent watching actors play the anthropomorphised animals in this musical version. The stoats and weasels were my absolute favourite element, becoming panto villains, giving the play a theatrical structure and adding to the humorous tone. Whilst the songs are bland, they at least covered up any stilted acting, and their use of props to create the scenery made it seem like house-party charades. But above all I'm glad I saw this because it helped me remember how very charming the story of Mole, Ratty, Badger and Toad is.

Pleasance Courtyard, 14-26 Aug (not 20), 11.00am. tw rating 3/5 | [Lia Sanders]

THEATRE

Ben Okri's The Comic Destiny Lazzi

An adaptation of Ben Okri's book 'The Comic Destiny', this show is a gritty

experimental piece that confronts the turbulence of our world. The show flickers between the rehearsal process and the finished product to highlight the softening boundaries between actor and character. Indeed by displaying the effect characterisation and performance has upon them, the audience is forced to feel similarly affected. Consequently the play has a serpentine narrative that tantalisingly encrypts meaning. The acting was faultless and utterly convincing, particularly David Johnstone's presentation of a bipolar lunatic that alters between timidity and wickedness. The philosophical subject matter is at times a little exhausting but only because of its sheer profundity and depth.

Scottish Storytelling Centre, 14-26 Aug, 7.00pm. tw 4/5 | [Paige Wilson]

Closer Rush Theatre Company

I am a huge fan of Patrick Marber's writing. 'Closer' is a quick-witted and apt take on modern relationships, telling the story of four strangers whose lives become entwined through love, sex, mystery and betrayal. This show started slowly but got better as it went along. Rush Theatre Company depicts characters relationships and echoes of their past with subtle mirroring of movements and language, which works nicely throughout. However, despite some moments of good acting, I wasn't completely engaged in the characters' worlds or their relationship to one another and it seemed to drag in places. This wasn't helped by some technical difficulties along with continuous backing music which I found distracting, making it a harder piece to watch.

Zoo Southside, 12-25 Aug (not 28), 9.00pm tw rating 3/5 | [Ella Fryer-Smith]

Confessions Of A Grindr Addict Best Of Sydney Fringe

'Confessions of a Grindr Addict' is a one man show in which Felix recounts his experience with grindr (an app that allows gay men to find each other/have sex with strangers); as a heterosexual female, I am possibly not the target audience for this show, though it did offer me an insight into a side of the gay dating world that I was previously unaware of. In the first half of the show Felix mostly brags about his conquests but becomes more sympathetic as the play progresses and his ambivalent relationship towards grindr emerges; he reveals how difficult it is to find a real connection with someone using the service. 'Confessions of a Grindr Addict' ultimately explores universal themes of loneliness, addiction and sex. Assembly Hall, 2-26 Aug, 9.00pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Olivia Lyth]

A Dirty Martini TrailBlaze Theatre Company

A fellow critic and I were met with some bombastic chat as we entered the Cabaret Club set, "it's frightfully exciting to be out in the provinces", one of the performers quipped. A satirical and cutting glimpse into bourgeois 1920s society, this was a delightful experience. Staged from the point of view of an author developing his characters, the audience thrived as they made decisions on the actions of protagonist and wannabe starlet Gwen, in her desperate pursuit of fame. Should she go to a nightclub or to the races? Follow her head or her heart? The cast reacted to audience-led narrative with delightful cheer, all the while illuminating the darker sides of 1920s glamour. A hilariously interactive, innovatively directed performance.

Zoo Southside, 12-27 Aug (not 14) 4.30pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Adam Bloodworth]

Dragged Up Queen Mary Theatre Group

Dragged Up is a portrayal of three dysfunctional relationships; two between a man and a woman, and one between a mother and her daughter (Georgie). Every character is played by a person of the opposite sex, except for Georgie who is played by a girl, but isn't sure what gender she fits into. It's a clever idea, which theoretically raises questions about how we perform our gender in everyday life.

However, in practice what 'Dragged Up' reveals is how difficult it is to successfully perform a female character if you're a male and vice versa. The result is a stereotype of men and women rather than believable characters, so unfortunately 'Dragged Up' doesn't quite achieve what it sets out to.

theSpace @ Venue45, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25 Aug, 7.05pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Olivia Lyth]

Amusements Sleepwalk Collective

"We're all here for a good time, aren't we?" Alone on stage, Iara Solano Arana purrs this opening question directly into your ear through headphones and a fuzzy electronic soundscape. Utilising the deceptively simple language of lists, childhood memories, sexual fantasies and fragments of in-flight safety briefings, this is part confession, part meditation. It carries an emotional charge like a bare wire, making you intensely aware of your presence in the space and your part in the performance. The text is rhythmic and intimate, often disquietingly atmospheric, getting under your skin and raising hairs. Like an inkblot test, your personal response will vary, but this is an immersive, unique diversion which you must experience for yourself. Summerhall, 11-26 Aug, 5.45pm.

tw rating 5/5v[Dave Fargnoli]

Shopping Centre by Matthew Osborn

Jim is a man disillusioned with society: an anti-liberal with a David Cameron fetish. We see him seeking refuge from the real world, in the basement of a shopping centre, as a full-scale riot erupts upstairs. As the protagonist in this one-man play, Matthew Osbourne gives a stellar performance and his deadpan delivery is highly effective. He is both mysterious and engaging as misfit Jim, combining the drama of the emotional climaxes with incredibly witty one-liners. Unfortunately, the script lets him down slightly- the overall pace is too slow and feels slightly repetitive. But it's hard to stop wondering about just who Jim is and how he got that way.

Gilded Ballon at Third Door, 1-26 August (not 13, 20), 4.30pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Anna McDonald]

Strong Arm Vicky Graham Productions

An hour long, one man show about bodybuilding might seem something of a burden, resting on the not especially muscled shoulders of Finlay Robertson. He has only an austere stage with faded mirrors and a single chair to help him tell the story of Roland Poland, fat kid turned bodybuilding hulk. But Robertson can convey all of this; belying our senses we become convinced that an obese child and then a ripped athlete stands in front of us. This story of protein shakes and bench presses is surprisingly dark, looking at the extremes of the human body and the extremes that people will go to in order to fill a gap. The ending finishes us off with a final, uncompromising blow.

Underbelly Cowgate, 2-26 Aug (not 13), 4.10pm. tw rating 5/5 | [Lia Sanders]

Six and a Tanner Fair Pley

This tale of child cruelty, set against the backdrop of 1950s Glasgow, is masterfully handled by David Hayman in this one-man performance. Based on Rony Bridges autobiographical account of his upbringing, the play unfolds in a funeral parlour, his father's coffin the only witness to Joe's outpouring of anger, hurt and ultimately love towards his dead father. As Hayman explained in the interesting Q&A session which followed this show, writing the piece was a way for Bridges to heal the wounds inflicted by his traumatic childhood. The result is a funny, disturbing and surprisingly warm piece of theatre, which allows Hayman to showcase his full range of acting talents. Proceeds from tickets sales go to Hayman's charity Spirit Aid.

Assembly Rooms, 2-26 Aug(not 13), 1.00pm tw rating 4/5 | [Charlotte Ryan]

A Modern Town When I Say Jump

"It wasn't personal, it was business." Welcome to Newton Basset, and the slippery world of banking and borrowing that exorcises the community spirit of this forgotten seaside town. A tale of greed and family pride, this sharp, slick performance is particularly relevant in light of the struggling financial conditions today. The sparse set accentuates the cast's skill at portraying every inch of the town economy's gradual decline from tight-knit local shops to broken (but far from broke) businesses. This is a performance driven with flair, sensitivity and plausibility that is a privilege to watch. Subtly endearing and emotive, this is a poignant reminder not to forsake rustic roots for an imaginary Elysium of economic glory.

Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug (not 14), 4.00pm tw rating 5/5 | [Ciara Knowles]

Blink Soho Theatre / nabakov / Escalator East to Edinburgh

Beautiful. Hilarious. Voyeuristic. Those words don't always fit well together, but this innovative new play is all these things and more. It is impossible not to be smitten by each of the quirkily damaged characters as their off-beat, unconventional relationship unfolds. The play is punctuated by regular moments of gut-wrenching laughter, yet its bittersweet conclusion feels appropriate, inevitable even. Appropriately, given the play deals with a need to feel watched, and the way that a distant, voyeuristic relationship can provide intimacy, at times the audience reacted more as though we were watching people we cared about, than performers in a play. Unusual, joyous and heartbreaking, this is a near-perfect theatrical experience that will stay with you.

Traverse Theatre, 2-26 Aug, times vary. tw rating 5/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Caesarean Section -Essays On Suicide

Teatr Zar

Don't be fooled by the title; Caesarean Section - 'Essays On Suicide' may be about what brings people to the edge, but more importantly it is about what brings them back from it. With stunning Corsican music, and brilliant dances, 'Essays...' almost feels like physical theatre, but it most certainly tells its story well. With a wonderfully simple set including a deep line of broken glass in the middle and a clever use of red wine, 'Essays...' even manages to find moments of humour as well as overpowering intensity. I will admit, it will take a better mind than mine to capture the essence of what Teatr Zar have achieved, but whatever it was, it was inspiring and beautiful.

Summerhall, 9-20 Aug (not 14), 7.00pm. tw rating 5/5 | [Charlotte Mortimer-Talman]

Casablanca: The Gin Joint Cut Gilded Balloon / Tron Theatre

The actors are talented, the accents authentic and the format original; so why isn't this show more enjoyable? Prior to today I was largely unaware of the story of 'Casablanca' - and following today, I'm still unclear about what actually happens. Indeed, this is the show's fundamental flaw; even it doesn't know what it is. It seeks to be parody, homage and new interpretation all at once, and as an audience it is impossible to form the right emotions in time. The acting itself is convincing and stylised, but it is the show's structure and writing, as it stutters from incomplete scene to incomplete scene, that creates palpable atmospheric confusion - perhaps one for only the most ardent Bogart fans.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 - 27 Aug (not 13, 20), 5.15pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Olivia Sleet]

ThreeWeeks

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TW RATINGS | 1/5 Bad | 2/5 Mediocre | 3/5 Good | 4/5 Very Good | 5/5 Brilliant | www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk