

EDITION #02:
SUN 04 AUG 2013

CABARET

Adam Caslin: Nobody's Boy (Adam Caslin)

To be fair, 'Nobody's Boy' is an honest performance. Adam Caslin's voice is unrestrainedly emotional, like that of an angst-ridden teenager, alone in his bedroom singing along to his favourite gloomy playlist. In fact, this is almost exactly what 'Nobody's Boy' is: After a long instrumental prelude by his alarmingly melodramatic accompanist, Caslin enters and belts through a set of covers of everything from Radiohead to Rufus Wainwright. The performance jumps disconcertingly between cheeky bum wagging and desperate angst, occasionally punctuated by rather feeble dramatic interludes; all supposedly serving as a narrative of troubled childhood. Though a talented singer, Caslin's vocal performance does little to make up for the baffling, uncomfortable spectacle that is 'Nobody's Boy'.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, until 25 Aug, 9.00pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Ivan Kroupin]

COMEDY

2 Irish Men Walk Into A Bar - In A Yurt (Robert Coyle and Gary Lynch)

Yurts and stand-up, together at last. This comedy showcase brought its audience four performers over the hour, strung together by the confident compering of Coyle and Lynch. The wide-ranging line-up offered highlights in the form of Andy Zapp, with an endearingly rough performance, and Daphna Baram, whose sassy and vivacious set poked criticism at her home country of Israel. One criticism of '2 Irish Men...' is that the format only granted each performer a very short time slot. While that allowed for a decent variety of stand-up comedy, it also meant that some performers struggled to connect with the audience. Overall, however, this was a consistently enjoyable way to spend an hour.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, until 25 Aug, 7.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Tom Bateman]

A Danish Bagpipe Comedian (Claus Reiss)

Ranging over topics from competitive bagpiping to bodily fluids, Claus Reiss tells a series of anecdotes that exude enthusiasm and knowing self-deprecation. Dressed in kilt and sporrán, Reiss offers a conversational style which encourages participation; audience contests and song requests result in a show that feels warm and inclusive, as he offers to answer the audience's bagpipe-related questions. The show's musical interludes build on this charm, as Reiss wryly remarks that it's all right if people cover their ears. By contrast, some of the prepared comic material suffered a little from a reliance on tired comedic tropes. His engagement with the audience makes up for it, however, demonstrating admirable flexibility and wit, especially when you consider he's performing in his second language.

Laughing Horse @ Jekyll & Hyde, until 15 Aug, 5.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Tom Bateman]

Ian Smith - Anything (CKP in association with DAA Management)

Ian Smith, who you may or may not know from BBC's 'Popatron', successfully tackles the ambiguous, all-encompassing topic of anything in this hilarious one hour performance. He tackles everything from visits to the doctor to living with immature, post-university house-mates to the importance of primary school awards. Smith talks you through his not-so-together life using his quick wit and sympathetic demeanour to pull you in. Set in this warm and cosy space, the audience is easily engaged by his shenanigans and can literally see the sweat and tears going into his performance. A highly enjoyable show not to be missed, and the funniest thing you'll see this tax year.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 25 Aug (not 12), 5.45pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Alice Harrold]

Do A Show (Hayley Ellis and Brennan Reece)

In the basement of Espionage, Hayley Ellis and Brennan Reece do a show about doing a show. This not-so-dynamic duo play best friends who aren't getting along and at times even use the audience against each other. This, combined with their determination to get through the hour without one of

them having to phone the other's mother, results in a comical mix of magic tricks, game show dating and the sharing of intimate secrets. The Fringe often plays host to awkward weirdness and this is no exception, though it works well for them. There was a bit of stopping and starting but the duo always picked it up again, demonstrating the saving grace of this performance: Ellis and Reece's enthusiasm.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, until 13 Aug, 12.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Alice Harrold]

Anil Desi's Another Night At The Movies (Anil Desi / Free Festival)

Anil Desi is, perhaps slightly unfortunately, a lot funnier when he's not being Anil Desi. With a sharp ear for voices and a remarkable eye for body language, Desi is able to jump from ET to Al Pachino via Optimus Prime with ease, and his stories and jokes about his silver screen heroes hit the spot. However, when he's doing straight stand-up on his own life and observations Desi's routine flags. Punchlines become thin on the ground and the audience drifts a bit, although his closing tale of having sex as Christian Slater is a cracker. Slow to start and needing more focus on his impressions and a little less stand-up, this is still a decent, if not spectacular, show.

Laughing Horse @ City Café, until 25 (not 12, 19), 9.15pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Andrew Bell]

Ant Dewson: Now That's What I Call Musical Comedy (Antdewson.co.uk / Free Festival)

The tiny room - smallest in the Fringe, apparently - was packed with punters; no mean feat considering the competition. Musical comedy is always risky, but Dewson's songs are genuinely funny, and often very clever in their wordplay and construction. Catchy tunes with innocent melodies lead to filthy final punch lines, which land perfectly almost every time. Dewson notes the weakness of his act - the banter between the songs - but acknowledging that is not enough. He seems charming enough; with some polish he could be really good, but the show is a little uneven and patchy. If he couldn't overcome the British audience's reluctance to sing and dance, he did at least leave everyone with a smile on their face.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, until 25 Aug (not 13), 7.15pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Dan Nightingale: Love In The Time Of Cholesterol (Lee Martin For Gag Reflex)

Despite a few inevitable preview slip-ups, Nightingale delivered a thoroughly enjoyable, consistently funny hour of smart, self-effacing comedy. Opening with a clever routine deconstructing his own flyer, he moved on to his central theme: at 32 he's looking for love, and to settle down. So far, so familiar. But there's a charmingly authentic air about Nightingale, and he doesn't allow the theme to become overbearing, using it more as a springboard for funny anecdotes and friendly banter with the audience. It's not perfectly polished - at times the confessional tone felt more like therapy to help resolve his daddy-issues - but if his goal is to meet someone nice, then he's certainly creating a good impression with audiences.

Pleasance Dome, until 25 Aug (not 12), 5.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Darren Walsh: I Am A Giant (Pay What You Want / Darren Walsh)

Darren Walsh makes a hilarious stand-up debut with 'I am A Giant', a performance that showcases the six-foot-eight comedian's huge reserves of comic potential. His razor sharp one-liners offer a brilliant take on life's little eccentricities and the everyday expressions we take for granted. These are supplemented by delightfully bizarre and impeccably delivered puns and visual gags which are guaranteed to leave you laughing. Although his progression from one joke to the next can be a little disjointed and his slightly cringeworthy comedy songs became a little tiresome by the end of his half hour stint, it was still an incredibly funny performance. This show is not perfect, but Darren Walsh is undoubtedly a Milton Jones in the making and I'm sure we have not seen the last of him.

Heroes @ The Hive, until 25 Aug (not 13), 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Stephen Maughan]

Zoe Lyons - Pop-up Comic (Corrie McGuire For Objective Talent)

One-footed pigeons. This is proof positive that Zoe Lyons is a pretty inventive woman. Bounding through an assortment of subjects, she certainly creates an energetic performance. Fast flowing jokes and fluidity of facial expression keep the audience chuckling throughout, whilst her own giggles add an air of



SNAP OF THE DAY: Vertical Line Theatre's 'Superhero Snail Boy' at the Bedlam Theatre Photo: Kat Gollock

ease to the room. The progression isn't wholly coherent, but she manages to link her material so it seems natural, as the leap from anoraks to air fresheners clearly is. An almost-too-intimate affair, Lyons nimbly emphasises the absurdity of modern day life, and, actually, the technical blips on this occasion (a wonky projector and page-turning experiments) only served to make it all the more charming.

The Assembly Rooms, until 25 Aug, 5.00pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Natasha Gartside]

David Baddiel - Fame: Not The Musical (Avalon Promotions)

David Baddiel's first Fringe show in fifteen years is less a stand-up routine and more a highly entertaining, intelligent lecture on the experience of being famous. Covering the highs and lows of being marginally famous, including the joys of groupies and the perils of Twitter, Baddiel's anecdotes have the audience laughing and thinking in equal measure. Not quite the acerbic firebrand of his youth, Baddiel is none the less a charming, interesting speaker. Sadly, the show lacks the razor's edge needed to elevate it from good to great. Although funny, one gets the feeling Baddiel is more at home with the

written word than performing live these days. Regardless, this is an amusing hour of thought provoking comedy.

Assembly George Square, until 11 Aug, 7.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Bell]

PHYSICAL

Leo (Circle Of Eleven and Assembly)

Surreal and ingenious, this gravity defying show returns to the Fringe to charm, confuse and astound audiences once again. With an almost reverential nod to the quirks of silent era slapstick, the world is turned on its side by a performance that is carried out a full 90 degrees to the right - that is, he performs most of his mime on a backdrop perpendicular to the audience. Next to this wonderfully bizarre display is a screen onto which the action is projected the 'right way up'. With nothing but a briefcase and a hat, Tobias Wegner gradually discovers and explores his new found gravity, a new reality which he begins to influence and create with innocent and innovative precision.

Assembly George Square, until 25 Aug, 6.00pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Jasmine Faller]

Sword And I (Bruce Fauveau / Free Festival)

The limber Bruce Fauveau demonstrates skill in mime and impersonation to enthrall us with his tale about a man who finds a magical sword which leads him down a dark and troublesome road. This is a cheeky, amusing and sometimes tragic performance by the French-born Fauveau. Between the segments of the sword story are sketches which play on social stereotypes, with one piece on accents that's a bit cringe-worthy. At some points these interludes seem a little clumsy - more a means to exhibit theatrical skills than a well thought-out narrative. However, Fauveau's abilities, both physical and vocal, are undeniable, and anyone searching for an up-and-coming performance artist should give this show a go.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 25 Aug (not 14), 12.15pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Jasmine Faller]

1/5 Bad
2/5 Mediocre
3/5 Good
4/5 Very Good
5/5 Excellent

Echolalia (Jen McArthur & Kallo Collective)

If Hoover attacks, shortbread and invasion of personal space don't ruffle your feathers, this might be your kind of thing. Jen McArthur plays a lonely woman with Asperger's syndrome in a 1940s wasteland, accompanied by sparse possessions, rituals, rehearsals for job interviews and social engagements that never happen. 'Echolalia' was conceived after McArthur was "tickled by the social 'weirdness' of autistic children", a discovery that it's difficult to feel entirely comfortable with. Although magnificently performed, you have the giggling sense that this isn't the most balanced, responsible account of Asperger's syndrome. There are one or two moments which address more serious implications, but these are quickly overshadowed by impeccably executed buffoonery. A whimsical, fantastic spectacle, dogged by dubious moral implications.

C Aquila, until 26 Aug (not 12), 3.40pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Holly Sharp]

MUSICALS & OPERA

A Glee Inspired Romeo And Juliet (Denver School Of The Arts)

Romeo and Juliet, appropriately played by teenagers, with pop songs, heartbreak and tons of energy. Confident actors took on an ambitious task, though with such a large cast it might have been good to choose a show with a better spread of roles. Contemporary songs added highlights but they were scarce; Gotye in the midst of Shakespeare's prose was quirky and I wanted to hear more to keep the show's pace up. The company sang and harmonised well together though, especially the Nurse and Juliet. At times some words were lost, but the simple staging, editing of the original script and intonation kept the storyline easy to follow. A fun piece for any age but don't expect too much glee.

C, until 12 Aug (not 7), 11 am.
tw rating 3/5 [Eleanor Lang]

Guido! (Guidophiles)

With even a title that is bursting with energy, 'Guido!' is a high impact show with saucy dance numbers, campy performances and cheeky comedy. The cast are super enthusiastic, with standouts being Amy Forrest and Tom Bailey who both give strong, confident turns as Elizabeth and Catesby respectively. The singing,

however, was sometimes a little off-key and the comedic footing occasionally slipped which resulted in some good punch lines being either dropped or thrown away completely (and the repeated gay jokes were a little dated and very nearly in bad taste). The show could be really great if some of these issues are addressed, but purely on its potential 'Guido!' is an incredibly spirited and worthy musical.

C too, until 22 Aug, 3.50pm.

tw rating 3/5 [Patricia-Ann Young]

THEATRE

Agamemnon (Jethro Compton)

'Agamemnon' tells a powerful tragic love story, adapted from the classic legend and expertly staged through the shell-shock induced delusions of Agamemnon, a soldier in 1918 who is far from family and in need of help. The bunker provides an intense, intimate setting that works very well with this new adaptation and brings the fraught emotional struggles of the characters to life. The show features excellent performances from the cast which along with the cleverly told plot and immersive staging makes for an engaging piece of theatre. Realism and moments of humour help bring authenticity to this Ancient Greek tale, yet there is a haunting sense of tragedy, madness and loss throughout.

C nova, until Aug 26, 8.30pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Elspeth Rudd]

Titus Andronicus (Deadly Theatre Productions)

Bloody, shocking, and gut wrenchingly tense at times, Deadly Theatre Productions have got Shakespeare's most gruesome play just right. This strong cast thrives in scenes of death and mutilation which have proven difficult for lesser groups to execute on stage. Rachel Jones plays a sexy, cunning and manipulative Tomora, set on getting revenge on Titus for the execution of her son; while Ben Blackburn captures perfectly the fallen hero Titus, who is in turn driven by revenge. Stand out performances also included those from Guido Caraciuti as Aaron, Alex Pett as Demetrius and Jamie Coles as Chiron who provide some comic relief in this dark play. Projected backdrops aside, the updated setting of post-communist Russia is a bit lost in the production; however it doesn't detract much from an excellent performance.

C nova, until 17 Aug, 12.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Anita Magee]

Everything's Elsewhere (ThisEgg)

The energetic, witty and loveable duo Sam and Bel are best friends. Despite their fondness and reliance on each other, the decision to live together is a disastrous one; the show recounts their daily movements and everyday collaborations, often with hilarious results. These moments of reasonable normality are punctuated by arguments and violent outbursts highlighting an emotional dependency which leaves no room for individuality; a suffocating realisation. Bel and Sam are believable, understandable characters both in their wit and sensitivity, and the addition of physical theatre is both funny and fitting. There are, however, moments of awkwardness in the show, and the ending is rather weak, leaving audience members baffled. A pleasant but somewhat forgettable 40 minutes.

C nova, until 13 Aug, 12.05pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Alice Taylor]

The Bunker Trilogy: Morgana (Jethro Compton)

The cast of the King Arthur legend have certainly done their rounds among new adaptations, but I doubt they've shared their tale among sandbags and spitfires before. Mapping the Arthurian world onto that of WWI trenches with instant-firing impact, 'Morgana' introduces the beautiful enchantress Morgan le Fay into the loneliness of the battlefield, to work her spell on some rather modern chaps of the round table. Opening with some slightly superfluous dialogue, the show soon gives way to a sobering tale, staged with sensitivity and an eye for detail. Punctuated with hypnotising folk melodies (from the bewitchingly fantastic Serena Manteghi as Morgana) and jolly music hall sing-along, this heartening production attacks the senses and powerfully takes siege of the imagination.

C nova, until 26 Aug, 5.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 [Katharine Wootton]

Pigmalion Zoo (OLTA)

'Pigmalion Zoo' is truly absurd, but strangely intoxicating and engaging. Pigmalion is instructing his daughter in the art of seduction, preparing her for God's supposed imminent arrival. The portrayal of his daughter is harrowing; a starved, mentally unstable wild animal is taught to be sexually expressive, but simultaneously betrays a vulnerability and reliance on instruction. The familial scenes that follow depict a disturbing and distorted reality. The use of

contemporary music such as 'The Bloodhound Gang' confuses this perverse reality and seems misplaced within the context of the show. The characters each have powerful stage presences and engage their audience despite the absurdities they act out. An unusual but rather intriguing show; certainly not one for all palates.

C nova, until 26 Aug, 3.30pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Alice Taylor]

League Of St George (Bricks And Mortar Theatre Company With The King's Head Theatre)

The show starts with an unruly burst of live music, an appealing feature of the show that is irreverent, chaotic and creates a boisterous, rowdy atmosphere well suited to the 1970s skinhead setting. 'League Of St George' tackles difficult issues such as being gay in a hyper-masculine, fascist subculture which comes to an intense climax. There are plenty of funny moments among the more serious scenes and the play sensitively handles Adam's struggle with his sexual identity. Oliver Tunstall (Adam) gives a standout performance in a production that manages to be shocking and serious but above all entertaining. The punk band's infectious energy will make you want to jump up and stomp around with them.

C nova, until 26 Aug (not 13), 9.55pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Elspeth Rudd]

Contractions (Sussex University Drama Society)

Forget the Fringe programme blurb's apparent misogyny; this performance is far from anti-feminist. Two actresses, both young but dynamically different, drive a series of scenes broken by oppressive blue light. At first a little flat, with overly clipped tones, the tension soon builds as Hope's crumbling poise effectively clashes against Robinson's naturally domineering figure and flawless facade. Don't expect realism to make the stage direction more appealing; simpering smiles and squirm-in-the-seat humour provoke more gasps than laughs. It's short but shocking, and includes a technical tip of the hat to the play's radio origins. Peaking in disturbing absurdity, Bartlett's script does raise serious suspicions about the demands of the workplace, and how far one might go to keep a job "these days".

C nova, until 10 Aug, 4.30pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Amber-Page Moss]

Artaud: A Trilogy (The Lincoln Company)

A performance immediately attacking every sense it can reach; ironic, since it makes little sense. Inspired by the French playwright, perhaps it makes a profound statement about sex, sacrifice or the Catholic Church, but no doubt you'll be too distracted to notice. Occasionally dragging in its surrealism, it is saved by strong, well-executed physical theatre. Clever moves and hypnotic projections combine for visual impact (if it is indeed the performers you are looking at and not the fellow audience members you are awkwardly forced to face). It's undeniably a brave and unashamed performance, requiring an equally brave and unashamed spectator. The ending leaves you picking up your wits as well as your shoes.

C nova, until 26 Aug, 6.10pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Amber-Page Moss]

Oresteia (Cambridge University ADC)

Playing games with the classics can sometimes see you getting your fingers burned. Intriguingly transporting the mythology of Agamemnon and Orestes to the dicey world of casinos, game shows and super-stardom, Cambridge University ADC sadly fail to quite play their cards right with this production. Whilst creating clever stereotypes of age-old characters - Electra the punky gamer, Oresteia the angsty karate kid - this is a production suffocating under the influence of too many creative ideas. Worthy of a watch for the die-hard classicist, it leaves the general audience with little sense of the show's actual game-plan as erratic changes of narrative perspective make a puzzling jigsaw of a great story and what could have been a promising premise for adaptation.

C, until 17 Aug, 7.30pm.

t/w rating 2/5 [Katharine Wootton]

This Was The World And I Was King (Hookhitch Theatre)

Awash with the exuberance of childhood imagination, Hookhitch Theatre's tale of love, loss and pain is a triumph of originality. Accompanied by hauntingly beautiful music, audiences are introduced to Lilly, Alexander and Evelyn and the magical world of their Father's stories. When wartime comes both the invented lives and the children's reality become more dramatic, as they attempt to hold on to the innocence and excitement of childhood. Enchanting at every turn, this production displays the best of devised theatre. The

sense of cohesiveness displayed by the company means it would be impossible to single out any one strong performer though the original songs of George Jennings take this piece from great to outstanding. An absolute delight - go see!

C nova, until 26 Aug (not 13), 4.15pm.

tw rating 5/5 [Christie Rolley]

The 'Lockerbie Bomber' (Nugget Theatre Company)

The bombing of an airliner bound for New York over the town of Lockerbie in 1984 is an event etched into the national memory. Nugget Theatre Company present a poignant new take on that fateful night and the events which followed. Compelling and persuasive, this piece of new writing, which dares to question the official story of Lockerbie, is executed well by all performers and although there were a few jarring dropped cues, this did not detract from the strong writing and committed acting. Carol Clark, as the mother of a child victim of the bombing, should be commended for an extremely emotive performance resulting in none too many dry eyes. Though not the comfortable viewing that some Fringe audiences may seek, the piece is a thought-provoking and refreshing watch.

C, until 13 Aug, 12.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Christie Rolley]

Wyrd (ImmerCity)

'Wyrd' was considerably immersive. The roles were brilliantly acted and not once did a performer break character. However, the play's promising premise, built around a séance led by three sisters to solve an ancient family murder, proved dull in execution. Victoria Jane Appleton shone as Fiona Warding, displaying the perfect balance of disdain for the supernatural process and common scepticism, giving her character and arc wonderful believability. The natural dialogue simmered away, but despite the realism, the plot hardly provided edge-of-your-seat thrills and on progression, wore thin. Its strength was its believability and a conclusion that proved, on reflection, far more sinister. Not a knockout, but worth seeing for anyone with interest in the occult's collision with the pedestrian.

C nova, until 26 Aug (not 12), 2.00pm, 7.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Otamere Guobadia]

WORDS & EVENTS

Head Hand Head (Laura Jane Dean)

This intense new act provides a fascinating and thought-provoking insight into obsessive-compulsive disorder. The performance begins with a look into a mirror, which is fitting, as the piece holds a mirror up to life; but one that magnifies every ordinary anxiety. A painfully self-aware sufferer of mental illness, the narrator skilfully draws the audience into her worrying world, finding the menace in the mundane. Her mesmeric voice, accompanied by dreamlike music, delivers a repetitive script that goes round in circles like a trapped train of thought. As a depiction of the journey into mental illness, it was a gripping and powerful piece. If you are interested in understanding mental health, or simply feeling introspective, this is the show for you.

C nova, until 13 Aug, 3.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Isobel Steer]

Tyke Rider: A Yorkshire Lass's Driving Adventure From The City Of Angels To Graceland Via The Big Easy (Nadia Brooks / Free Festival)

Sweet solo travelogue by journalist Nadia Brooks about her 6000 mile trip across the south of America. We get bucolic childhood reflections, bucolic praise of America - and less bucolic encounters with menacing eccentrics. She punctuates her story with voice clips from her nan and hosts, and felt-tip drawings of whimsical fantasies. The show heavily relies on puns and 80s cultural references from America and Sheffield - Alan Bennett and Jabberwocky, Knight Rider and Elvis - her comparisons of epic California and mundane Yorkshire are nice. She uneasily walks the line between spoken word and very gentle stand-up, reading from a script throughout and stumbling through slow bits, but goes out on a big spiritual science thought. Really sunny, for a Sun journalist.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters. The Comedy Bus, until 7 Aug, 10.00am.

tw rating 3/5 | [Gavin Leech]

INFO

For regular updates on ThreeWeeks coverage, sign up for our free email: www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/subscribe

For festival news and chat follow: www.twitter.com/ThreeWeeks

For recommended shows follow: www.twitter.com/TWittique

Published by ThreeWeeks Publishing, a division of UnLimited Media www.unlimitedmedia.co.uk

MORE ONLINE>

“I wouldn't miss Edinburgh for the world (well, maybe just the once, if they had a cake eating festival in Glasgow at the same time). Once you're at the Festival, and in amongst the buzz doing your show, it becomes a part of you; you're living and breathing it every day. And while, when the month is over, you're somewhat relieved, after eleven months away from it you're craving to be back - it's an addiction, really!”

We chat to Editors' Award winner Patrick Monahan - read it at www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/2013PM



PODCASTS>

Edition Three of the ThreeWeeks podcast magazine is now online, featuring...

Doug Segal

Jenny Bede

Bath Time

Bob And Jim

The Evolution Of iMaN

Ali McGregor's Jazzamatazz

The Real MacGuffins

Plus check out loads of Podcast Extras with clips of great Fringe shows

www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/podcasts

