

**EDITION #06:  
THU 08 AUG 2013**

## CABARET

### Tricity Vogue's Ukulele Cabaret (Tricity Vogue / Free Festival)

It's not so often you get to attend a ukulele themed cabaret, and the concept is as mildly amusing as the show itself, driven as it is by enthusiasm rather than outstanding talent. With a welcoming atmosphere and a rousing inclusive sing-along to get things going, the show skipped merrily through 'The Uke of Edinburgh Competition'. Each act presented a version of their full show and the raucous audience participation worked well, with the evening buzz of a crowd just starting their third pint. If you're looking for a bit of a song and dance, and a little Free Festival madness, you could certainly do worse.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 18 Aug (not 12), 9:00pm  
tw rating 3/5 | [Ivan Kroupin]

### Xara Vaughan

Xara Vaughan is a true talent. Coquettish and impossibly chic, she's new to the cabaret scene but you'd never guess. She lets rip on a wide variety of songs, paying homage to the greats with Bassey and Garland numbers, as well as dropping in some contemporary twists. Not everyone is a Coldplay fan, but the beauty and musicality of the arrangements by Mark Aspinall are simply stunning. In addition to all this, Vaughan is a consummate and inventive storyteller. She acts, feels and flirts with every line of every song, the Cockney twang in her voice adding a unique timbre. An extremely accomplished, beautiful sound, but not a conventional one. Intriguingly gorgeous.

New Town Theatre until 25 Aug (not 5, 12, 19), 7:20pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Elizabeth Jewell]

## CHILDREN'S SHOWS

### Romeo & Juliet (Bristol Old Vic Theatre School With New Mutiny Theatre Company)

If you want to introduce Shakespeare to your family at a young age, then this child-friendly

adaptation of his famous star-crossed lovers is a good place to start. Set entirely within a child's bedroom, this edited take manages to strike a good balance between child-friendly accessibility and remaining faithful to Shakespeare's poetic language. Combining action, humour and music, this production is fun, energetic and entertaining; the cast are enthusiastic and talented, both musically and dramatically. A slightly abrupt and incomplete ending is not enough to spoil things, and whilst adults may find everything a bit silly at times, children will be utterly enchanted.

Assembly George Square, until 18 Aug, 11:20am.

tw rating 4/5 | [Anita Magee]

## COMEDY

### Alex And Alexis Should Not Be Friends (Alexander Oliver And Alexis Wieroniewy / PBH's Free Fringe)

Awkwardness seems to be the glue binding these two disparate comedians together. Differences abound; not only their backgrounds (he's a student from Norfolk, she's an American grown-up), but also their comedic styles. Alex specialises in long rambling anecdotes, whereas Alexis is more fast-paced and punchy. A funny and polished support act, allegedly "not friends with either of them", introduced the set. All comics worked well together to produce an enjoyable lunchtime's entertainment, full of hints and tips on how to avoid general life failure. I failed to spot either the absurdist or satirical genres that were advertised in the billing; but having induced paroxysms of laughter, it remains a show worth checking out.

The Dram House, until 24 Aug (not 7, 14, 21), 1:45pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Isobel Steer]

### Live Bait (LetLuce)

Whilst the comedy created here is inclined towards the sillier side of things, that isn't to say it's not clever. Many sketches are rather juvenile, but all were performed with an enthusiasm that made proceedings very enjoyable. Several of the characters, notably the wedding dressmakers and a social outcast named Judith, were portrayed with lavish amounts of surrealism that proved extremely popular. Other efforts fell a little flat but the deliberately kitsch nature of the show managed to mask the slightly

poorer antics. If all sketches can be brought up to scratch, expect to see this comic pairing on a bigger stage sometime soon.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, until 25 Aug (not 12, 13), 4:30pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

### Katie Mulgrew: Your Dad's Not Funny (Katie Mulgrew/ The Stand Comedy Club)

Katie Mulgrew delivers a candid and engaging account of her journey to stand-up via slides and biographical anecdotes. It's personal comedy with teeth, and Mulgrew works to create a comfortable atmosphere with aptly articulated observations and unexpectedly wicked side-lines. Despite her perseverance and quick wit in the face of unwelcome surprises, it is a show that (while gaining a constant stream of chuckles and smiles) never quite yields that brand of convulsive shoulder shaking mirth that marks greatness. That as may be, you can expect to see honest, un-cynical comedy that's rough around the edges but tremendously warm. It is a show that I'm sure will grow in the telling.

The Stand Comedy Club III & IV, until 25 Aug (not 12), 11:0pm.

tw 3/5 | [Andrew Pollard]

### Jenny Eclair: Eclairious (Avalon)

'Eclairious' should come with a warning: it's glorious, but not for the squeamish. If a torrent of jokes about bras and ladybits are going to make you uncomfortable, then this 'Loose Women' after-dark romp is probably not for you. Wildly honest, Eclair can simultaneously mock and appeal to the '50 Shades' mummy-porn generation; but perhaps less so to their awkward-looking husbands who got dragged along for the ride. In equal measure, Eclair is grumpy and theatrically silly, complaining about flabby knees and revelling in the unrivalled joy that comes from wearing big pants. Despite a lot of gags riffing on the menopause and pissing yourself, Eclair proves that you can be scarily smart, but still find fart jokes funny. And honestly, who doesn't?

Gilded Balloon Teviot until 17 Aug, 7:30pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Elizabeth Jewell]

### Crimes Against Comedy (Edinburgh Dungeon)

The Dungeon's Fringe special, 'Crimes Against Comedy', crafts the regular grisly tour into a piece of rather impressive

promenade theatre. The actors coped professionally with the inconsistencies created by dawdling, disorientated audience members and our whole group was left yelping with disgust by a captivating torturer, who handled interaction with ease and charm. Particularly commendable were Sawney Bean and his eerie sister - not only genuinely unsettling, but painting their segment of the show with genuine pathos, with unsuccessful endeavours to find suitors in the audience. The quest to shock became a little over-chewed towards the end, and at times the SFX felt gratuitous; but the mixed-media ingenuity, along with the Dungeon's talented dwellers, make this a highly recommendable tourist activity.

The Edinburgh Dungeon, until 26 Aug, 10:15am, 10:45am - 6:15pm, 6:45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Kate Pasola]

### Croft & Pearce (Vivienne Smith Management Ltd)

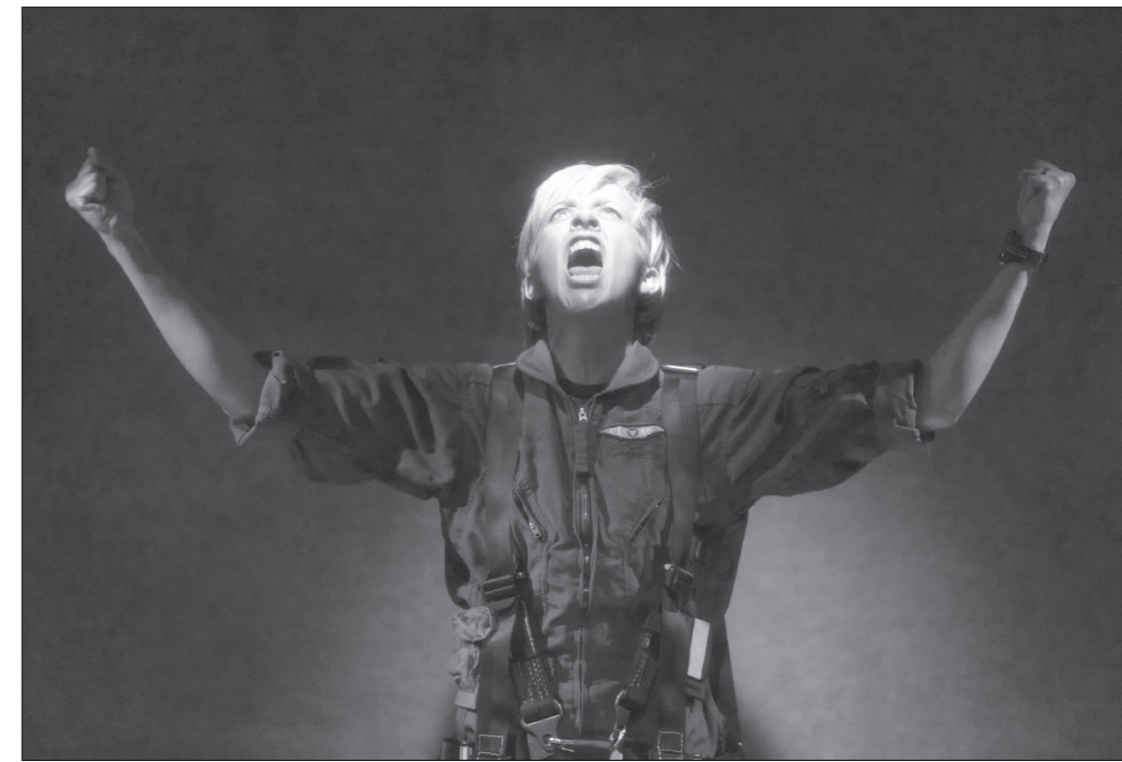
If someone were to ask me to describe British culture in an hour, I'd point them in the direction of 'Croft and Pearce'. A socially awkward house of mirrors, these sketches exaggerate British archetypes to brilliant comic effect in an extremely fluid and well oiled show, in which the actors swirl and lunge from one bit to the next, armed with nothing but two stools and an empty stage. The characters played by this talented duo are engrossing, well observed and frequently head-flingingly funny. If you're a fan of the likes of 'Armstrong and Miller', or indeed, if you simply enjoy laughing, 'Croft & Pearce' are most certainly worth your time and money.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 26 Aug (not 14), 4:30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Pollard]

### Here She Be (Nat Luurtsema)

Comedy inspired by negativity is nothing new but Nat Luurtsema's approach makes for an entertaining hour. The title gives a sense of delusions of grandeur and confidence that consciously defy the actual content of the show; telling us details of her life, from working with her ex to moving back in with her parents, Luurtsema pulls no punches as she discusses hitting her self-proclaimed rock bottom. There were moments of predictability, particularly in the relating of her mother's desire for her to get married, but Luurtsema manages to deliver all her material with a chaotic eccentricity that



## SNAP OF THE DAY: Get it out of your system. 'Grounded' at the Traverse Theatre. Photo: Rich Dyson

narrowly prevents it from becoming clichéd. Steel yourselves mentally for an hour of comically pessimistic musings.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 26 Aug, 2:45pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Mairi McNicol]

### How Do I Get Up There? (How Do I Get Up There? / The Assembly Rooms)

Thud! That's the sound of enthusiasm, as the performers quite literally throw themselves into an energetic sketch show, complete with occasional prat-falls. As this team were advertised as Radio 4 stars, I was expecting verbal wizardry, but was pleasantly surprised to find that they were also talented physical comedians. Pop culture has inspired a great deal of the material, making the show easily accessible, but exploring such easy pickings with imaginative, high concept scenarios proved a welcome addition. All three performers were equally gifted, although particular tribute must be paid to the wonderfully expressive James Kirk. Guaranteed laughter, from a trio who seem to be very much on the way up.

Assembly Rooms, until Aug 25 (not 10), 4:00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Isobel Steer]

## THEATRE

### Solstice (Solstice Productions in Association with Birnam Arts)

There's an outside corpse on the floor of a Highlands cabin, and those who put it there are awaiting the cover of darkness to move it. Darkness that isn't coming, because it's the longest day of the year. This is the situation facing Gemma and Will in this tense, thickly layered play, which, behind its veneer of dark humour, is a haunting exploration of responsibility, madness and damaged childhoods. The question of why the dead man was killed is gradually answered during the production, but the play's real power lies in an unexpected succession of revelations around the two protagonists' relationship, and the disturbing yet moving portrayal of a woman driven to the edge of sanity. Absorbing, thought-provoking theatre.

Assembly Roxy, until 26 Aug (not 12, 19), 1:45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Sarah Richardson]

### Speak No Evil (FULLfuse Theatre)

What does it mean to have the right to speak, if you can somehow

be prevented from using it? This question is at the heart of 'Speak No Evil': a quietly provocative, deeply engaging production that explores the ways in which people are censored in what they say - and what they believe. Told from the viewpoint of a young girl from Belarus, Europe's last dictatorship, this three-person performance fuses spoken word with arresting elements of physical theatre to examine various degrees of oppression of speech: from the extreme of dictatorship, to attitudes towards women and even well-intentioned parental control. Simply staged, beautifully written and outstandingly delivered, this is a captivating, original piece of theatre that ought to be heard.

Spotlites @ The Merchants' Hall, until 14 Aug, 5:35pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Sarah Richardson]

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

## Diablo (Spanner In The Works Theatre Company)

Harrowing. Horrifying. Yet completely gripping; this is not for the faint of heart. It's a hard-hitting exploration of human trafficking, representing a group of flawed, damaged characters trapped in a life of prostitution in the seedy underbelly of Belfast. A young Ukrainian girl is tricked, sold into this joyless world of suburban slavery. It is her transformation that is most heartbreaking: seeing her optimism and enthusiasm change in moments to confusion and horror until, ultimately, she is completely broken by these awful experiences. It's stomach-turning in its scenes of violence and rape, not sensationalised, but presented brutally, authentically. Dramatically, the lack of resolution felt a little disappointing, but given the very real problem they're examining, that's only appropriate.

C aquila, until 13 Aug, 3.40pm.

tw rating 4/5 [Andrew Leask]

## Look Back In Anger (Lincoln Company)

This production is enjoyable enough, but it falls some way short of capturing the subtlety of John Osborne's admittedly tricky script. All four actors gave spirited performances, to a mostly empty room, and should be commended for their effort and enthusiasm. This uncomfortable tale of sexual politics in a twisted marriage relies heavily on the complexity of the character Jimmy; he should be impossible to pin down: mercurial, menacing and mesmerising in equal parts. Sadly, this Jimmy just didn't have that spark and the production itself lacked a little bite. Overall, the performance felt workmanlike, as though they knew the words,

and could go through the motions to deliver a relatively convincing facsimile, without ever really understanding their characters.

C too, until 26 Aug (not 13), 12.50pm.

tw rating 3/5 [Andrew Leask]

## Raiders: The Whisky Trader (Theatre For Africa)

Combine seasoned comic storytellers, a Fringe crowd and a lot of whisky and it's hardly surprising that such a bonkers production is the result. A fascinating tale of malt whisky on its journey from the streets of Scotland to its place in the eastern Cape of Africa, this sober-sounding storyline belies a production that guzzles on silliness. With cobbled-together props, barrels of audience participation and a kick of Monty Python-like farce that edges dangerously close to the puerile, this is a niche theatrical tippie that certainly won't appeal to all. However, if you can forgive the odd pun too many, this show offers, particularly to groups of mates, a great raucous knees-up, fizzing with fun.

Spotlites @ The Merchant's Hall, until 20 Aug, 5.25pm.

tw rating 3/5 [Katharine Wootton]

## Say It Again, Sam (DBS Productions)

I don't know if Humphrey Bogart was an Edinburgh fan but 'Say it Again, Sam' imagines the Scottish city's drizzly streets and secretive snickleways right through the lens of one of Bogart's iconic characters. Moodily cinematic, this production has every film noir trope in book thrown at it, from the busty (and infuriatingly stupid) brunette to the slinky jazz and depressive boozing. Dealing with the tricky case of a missing sister (cue the brooding interior monologue and arched

eyebrow), one thing this show never quite gets to the bottom of is whether it wants to be straight-faced serious or pantomime parody. An unadventurous script and flat gags sadly leave this one mystery that is never really solved.

Sweet Grassmarket, until 25 Aug, 1.35pm.

tw rating 2/5 [Katharine Wootton]

## Snooze (Chimaera Theatre / Free Festival)

The Circus of Dreams is surreal, mysterious yet strangely magnetic. The Ringmaster, Dolly and Ariel invite you into the Circus as both a spectator and an employee. Interestingly the action is informed by actual dreams collected in a series of workshops, adding an element of truth, importance and intrigue to the action. Following this vein, the show takes on the form of a dream: confusing, ever ungraspable yet enthralling and all-consuming. The acting is truly brilliant with sincere, believable improvisation and playful interaction with the audience. Chimaera Theatre have combined those two essentials- an intriguing concept and a spectacular cast- into one wonderful show. The Circus of Dreams awaits your arrival.

Laughing Horse @ City Cafe, until 8 Aug, 12.30pm. tw rating 4/5 [Alice Taylor]

## The Worst Of Scottee (Scottee Inc)

A parody of confession for the reality TV generation, Scottee regales us with tales of the very worst things he's ever done, from inside a photo booth. Part musical, part stand-up, the production begins with flamboyance and theatricals. As the show progresses, however, and everyone gets more comfortable, the confessions become increasingly heartfelt; the veneer of silliness sheds and we are left with Scottee; on stage, alone, beyond the protective shell of the photo booth. The transition from ridiculous to devastating is so subtle you won't notice it, until he has stripped himself bare. A rare and utterly bewitching performer, with a show that is honest, simple and cathartic.

Assembly George Square, until 24 Aug (not 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19), 8.40pm

tw rating 4/5 [Immi Calderwood]

## Hag (The Wrong Crowd)

Evil Baba Yaga is the stuff of nightmares (and Slavic folklore), and now she menaces the stage in 'Hag'. She enjoys nothing more than kidnapping and cannibalising children, and is portrayed as a cross between a Glaswegian washerwoman and what looks like a decomposing dragon. Although

aided by some puppetry, the character never quite creates the fear it is meant to. Nevertheless, the cast are talented, especially Tom McCall and Theone Rashleigh, who play multiple parts and practically shape-shift with each character change. Additionally, the story manages to provide family fun along with enough intellectual stimulation to keep the adults tuned in. Something with which to entice the older kids onto the Fringe trail.

Underbelly, Cowgate, until 25 Aug (not 13), 3.30pm.

tw rating 3/5 [Melissa Steel]

## Have I No Mouth (Brokentalers)

Welcome to Feidlim Cannon's 'therapy session', an astonishingly weird and wonderful event. Along with a psychotherapist and Cannon's actual mother, he explores the emotional damage done by the deaths of his father and brother. Sounds like a maudlin affair, but it is often a quirky celebration of their lives, and even his father's favourite drink, a Guinness. The sweet, bickering mother-son double act is hard not to relate to, and Cannon is also remarkable in his ability to explore the ghosts that the tragedies have left with him, in an unvarnished, stirring way. A unique insight into the eccentricities of a normal family that makes for compulsive viewing. Also includes the pleasing addition of balloons.

Traverse Theatre, until 25 Aug (not 5, 12, 19), times vary

tw rating 5/5 [Melissa Steel]

## Moving Family (Northern Nomads supported by Live Theatre)

Locking four teenagers in the back of a moving van is never a good idea, but particularly not when they carry as much emotional baggage as these four step-siblings. In this claustrophobic space, prejudices emerge and tensions quickly rise. While the play provides an interesting glimpse at bigotry and prejudice in young people, it ultimately proves predictable as the siblings work through their disagreements and biases. The characters' anger reaches boiling point so many times that the repeated confrontations grow tiresome and strain the actors' ability to keep the piece believable. Nonetheless, the jokes are funny, and the script captures problems with British society today, as well as the agony and ecstasy of being young and misunderstood.

Just The Tonic at the Caves, until 25 Aug (not 13), 3.20pm.

tw rating 3/5 [Elaine Teng]

## Goose (CalArts Festival Theater)

In addition to having written the production, Michael Yicaho brings his drama to life with consistent brilliance, captivating his audience in a whirlwind contemplation about space, relativity, time and why no one has turned up to his 13th birthday party. A fairly solemn and sad story is kept light-hearted by Yicaho's well-timed and well-formed charm and humour. 'Goose' also follows the inner thoughts of a child who is left behind by his father, working abroad for months at a time; a story relevant to anyone who has ever felt alone. The drama is delightful, thought-provoking and leaves you feeling deliciously satisfied and happy. I could have listened to Yicaho's monologue-style thoughts for hours.

Venue 13, until 24 Aug (not 5, 12), 10.30am.

tw rating 5/5 [Sarah Virgo]

## Boys (No Prophet Theatre Company/ Close Up Theatre)

Rogue road cones, AWOL cutlery and the dirty stench of communal student living contribute to making 'Boys' an uncannily accurate portrayal of young adulthood. A heady frenzy of mad parties, drugs, drink and Disney (because 'The Lion King' is all part of the rock and roll student lifestyle too, you know), this is a production that whacks you over the head with its understanding and un-patronising approach to adolescence. At over 100 minutes long, 'Boys' certainly demands a patient audience: a problem that could have been remedied by chopping a lot of forgettable scenes. However, what carries the production through to the bitter end is the outstandingly perceptive and sensitive acting of this young cast that truly belies their years.

C Aquila, until 26 Aug (not 12, 19), 9pm.

tw rating 4/5 [Katharine Wootton]

## Kiss Me Honey, Honey! (Gilded Balloon)

The minute you walk in the joint, you can tell that this is a production reeking with silliness and intent on inflicting giggles. When two lonely, middle aged blokes set up in their new hovel-like apartments, a mutual love between them becomes apparent when the brassy sounds of Shirley Bassey ring through the walls of their adjoining rooms. Yet whilst 'Goldfinger' and the like bellow out in every blackout, the show loses its way as the Bassey theme fails to be fully integrated into the show itself. All this then leaves behind is a bewildering narrative that flies about skittishly. Though teasingly funny with its

silly faces in silly wigs, it ultimately fails, because sadly some daft expressions can't save a badly told story.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 26 Aug (not 12), 6.45pm.

tw rating 2/5 [Katharine Wootton]

## Making News (The Spontaneity Shop / The Pleasance)

From the writers of 2012's spiky satirical hit 'Coalition', 'Making News' re-aligns the target of ridicule from parliament to the BBC newsroom. It's an impishly witty look behind the public headlines at the corporation's bureaucracies and scandals, taking digs at the Lib Dems and poor old Salford in its stride. Startlingly topical and with more punch than a Paxman interrogation, 'Making News' just falls short of hitting headline-grabbing brilliance by launching into some moments of absurdity, which suddenly diminish the hilarious authenticity of the rest of the production. Here the usually fabulous, star-studded cast are left struggling a touch with the script, the consistently incredible Phil Jupitus and Hal Cruttenden both excepted. Nonetheless, a cheekily clever production.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 25 Aug (not 12), 1.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 [Katharine Wootton]

## Wot? No Fish!! (Bread and Circuses)

Forget 'Come Dine with Me'; Danny Braverman would unquestionably make the best dinner host there is. Offering delicious fish balls to his audience on arrival, before launching into captivating and personal tales, told with simple sincerity and complete ease, 'Wot? No Fish!!' feels as casual and warming as an after-dinner chat with a friend. Rummaging through an enchanting box cluttered with family treasures, Danny shares the cheeky and cheering doodles of an old great-uncle, each of which helps to build up a beautiful story about love, Jewish family values and how lives intertwine. This is a production that, as Jewish tradition dictates, ensures no one goes away hungry, but leaves utterly stuffed on rich, life-affirming stories.

Summerhall, until 25 Aug (not 6, 13, 20), 3pm.

tw rating 4/5 [Katharine Wootton]

## WORDS & EVENTS

### Fringe Film Festival (C Film)

Upstairs in C nova there's a cosy cinema space, where you can pop in and see as many short films as

you can handle. The collection is incredibly varied, with films ranging from the sweet to the absurd. On the day in question, this reviewer saw a few flicks of note, in particular; 'Love Child' a quirky and surprising tale of a child who is replaced by a cat in her parent's affections, and 'Come Surf With Me', a collection of charming 60's holiday clips. In between these there were a few more studenty numbers; but this exhibition still provides a much needed pocket of escapism for those weary from the hustle and bustle of the streets below.

C nova, until 26 Aug, 10.00am.

tw rating 3/5 [Jasmine Faller]

## The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo

If the doldrums have struck, the Tattoo provides a cure - by being quite simply a sparkling spectacle. A combination of music and dance in its finest form, the performers' foot stamp, march, leap and twirl their way round the castle esplanade, with breath-taking panache. Rich bagpipe harmonies, booming Korean drums and movie soundtrack numbers from a New Zealand brass band make the show into both a highly Scottish affair and an international triumph. It's an astonishing demonstration of talent, from a motorcycle display with ladders to a Mexican fiesta, and contains costumes so colourful your eyes will pop. I shivered from the cold, but I don't regret a second. Hats off (it was windy) to them all. Edinburgh Castle, until 24 Aug, times vary. tw rating 5/5 [Natasha Gartside]

## INFO

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## MORE ONLINE➤

“ I have never felt Unleashed on stage, but then to be honest, I have never really enjoyed watching comedians who are unleashed, who take pride in their leashedlessness. Unleashed comedians often revere whisky snorting, tobacco swilling, early dying US comics like Sam Kinison as their gods. I'm 48 now and I think it is probably time to admit, I don't get it. I'm more of a Frank Muir kind of guy ”

Simon Evans on his 2013 show 'Leashed' at The Stand. Read his full guest column online at [www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/2013SE](http://www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/2013SE)



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