

**EDITION #19:  
WED 21 AUG 2013**

## CABARET

**Pick A Card, Any Card  
(No, Not That One!)  
(John Henry Blackwood /  
PBH's Free Fringe)**

A traditional sleight-of-hand card magician, John Henry Blackwood tells you he's tricking you, fluffs it deliberately, then really tricks you. That's the show. Everyone will be familiar with that tingle in the back of their brain that comes from being tricked, and Blackwood has an easy, relaxed patter that lulls the audience into this receptive state. Underselling his considerable skill with a warm, charming presence, his tricks are proficient and well-practiced. He provides a simple background on the origins of the card-deck in tarot, and at times touches on meta-commentary, linking these techniques to advertising, gambling or comedy. But for the majority of the show, it's just deceptively simple-seeming, elegant card tricks, presented with smooth transitions, without any pretensions otherwise.

The Street until 24 Aug, 2.45pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Joe Abel]

## CHILDREN'S SHOWS

**Ali McGregor Jazzmatazz  
(Ali McGregor/ Spiegeltent)**

Ali McGregor turns jazz music into family fun in this exciting, interactive hour. Children are invited onto the large dance floor to jig to the music, pop bubbles and interact with the special dancing duo Miss Jenny and Mr Monkey - even some parents joined in on the fun! McGregor's supreme professionalism and vocal talent is evident, as she manages to make children's favourites and pop classics alike sound sultry and elegant. Small children delight in acting like dogs, producing jungle noises and wiggling along to the catchy songs - ideal for tiring them out after an exciting day at the Fringe. An absolutely delightful way to spend an afternoon, whatever your age, Ali McGregor's 'Jazzmatazz' is well worth catching.

The Famous Spiegeltent, until 25 Aug, 4.00pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Christie Rolley]

## COMEDY

**Calm and Collected  
(Making Faces)**

Making Faces have created an exhilarating and animated sketch show, whose 'aim' is to find a solution to anxiety and stress-related problems. Featuring Ed Mayhew, Dan Curtis and Lizzie Kevan, the show is bustling with energy and vigour - it's anything but 'calm and collected'! Highlights included life-sized Guatemala dolls, hilariously dire poetry, and Curtis as a box-wearing, confused teenager on roller skates. It has everything from poetry, improv, spoken word and singing to conventional sketch comedy; proving itself to be one of the most diverse shows around. It did seem chaotic at times, trying to pack too much randomness into this comedic rollercoaster of an hour, and louder doesn't necessarily mean funnier. Overall, a cartoonish portrayal of life's problems.

Laughing Horse @ The Newsroom, until 25 Aug, 3.35pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Shiv Das]

**Colin Geddis - Comments  
Disabled (Green Dragon  
Media Ltd)**

The internet sensation and YouTube star, responsible for introducing the world to Barry "The Blender" Henderson, takes to the stage to try stand-up comedy. The multimedia spectacle, meant as a social satire about the youth of today, simply incorporates Geddis' various gripes about the world, perpetuating the sense that he has become old before his time. Videos from a selection of his personas keep the audience engaged, while his sheer lack of political correctness adds an element of shock value to the performance. The sidesplittingly inappropriate Geddis pushes the boundaries of propriety in a show that is most certainly not suitable for your grandmother. A great show, but definitely not one for the easily offended.

Underbelly, Bristo Square, until 25 Aug (not 12), 9.25pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Peter Dorman]

**A Panda Suit, Pythagoras  
and Plenty of Puns  
(Nikhil Tilwalli)**

I don't know about you, but if I were making my Fringe debut, dressing up in a panda suit would not be my first choice. Nevertheless, this was only the first of many impressive moves from a comedian who proved to be

as funny as he is bizarre. Openly obsessed with puns, it was hard not to leave the show feeling at least slightly intrigued by the wordplay, a tribute to his thought-provoking set. Tilwalli's personality seemed absolutely integral to his comedy, with a quirky disposition and awkward demeanour proving to be an endearing combination. With flawless logic he connects sex with mathematics, St Augustine with Usher and even Vin Diesel with Gandhi - this comedian is anything but unoriginal.

Just the Tonic at The Caves, until 22 Aug (not 13), 8.00pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Ankur Anil Shah]

**The Horne Section Live In A  
Cow (Avalon Promotions)**

"There will be music, comedy, chatting about the weather and no politics"; that's what we're told to expect at The Horne Section Live in a Cow, and 3 out of 4 are spot-on. Showcasing different acts each night, as well as pieces from the whole band and particular members, the Horne Section has something for everyone. Jazz singer Gwyneth Herbert was one of the guests present, and she left everyone in the room awe-struck - her music was punchy, beautiful and well-suited to the show's calibre. From magic tricks to the part where the audience helped to conduct the band, and a competition to see which band member is the best looking, the Horne Section was a delight, and most certainly not to be missed..

Underbelly, Bristo Square, until 25 Aug, 10.30pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Sarah Virgo]

**Absolutely Will Not Stop,  
Ever, Until You are Dead  
(Stuart Laws)**

This title is not a misnomer; Stuart Laws really does not stop! He is relentlessly dedicated to his material. He demands your attention and your participation, as this reviewer found out when having to emulate drinking from a punch bowl, fashioned from another audience member's outstretched arms. The show was committed to audience interaction, and sometimes in these incidences the performance is only as good as its crowd, but Laws proved himself to be fun, engaging and refreshingly funny, without resorting to expletives. The comedy he produces is so intimate and so interactive, I worry that his material might not transfer easily to a larger stage. Nevertheless, he holds no

prisoners, and everyone can (and will be) subjected to his wit!

Dragonfly, until 24 Aug (not 15, 22), 3.15pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Mairi McNicol]

**Milo McCabe: Schiz  
(IMWP)**

'Schiz' revolves around the chaotic inner workings of Milo's McCabe's mind, through the interesting concept of split personalities. And what a busy place his mind seems to be! Combined with a selection of short video clips, McCabe introduces us to a number of his eccentric characters. He begins strongly, with an energetic upper-class Wilko worker, kicking things off nicely with a dose of satirical humour and clever word play. However, although the characters certainly showcase Milo's imaginative energy and creativity as a comic, a number of them (including his 'Boring Facebook Friend') eventually offer nothing more than a vaguely amusing spectacle. Overall - an interesting concept, undoubtedly entertaining, but nowhere near the realm of side-splitting.

Gilded Balloon Teviot - balcony, until 25 Aug (not 7, 13) 5.00pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Kayleigh Head]

**Gordon Southern:  
The Kerfuffle (Julz Hay)**

Whilst Southern may not have kicked up a huge fuss on the comedy circuit, he has certainly caused some tremors along the way. Armed with a set of jingles (facilitated by a bargain piece of kit off eBay), Southern spends the hour telling some undisputedly hilarious anecdotes and observations, notably educating the audience on the darker side of discount websites. A musical send-off in honour of hip-hop felt surreal, after seeing him complain about performing to Prince Harry just minutes earlier. Whilst none of the material is particularly extraordinary, it certainly is original, and it was refreshing to see him mock teenage values without assuming that Ali G is still the precedent for young people stereotypes.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 26 Aug (not 12, 19), 5.45pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

**Stephen Carlin: Gambling  
Man (Bound & Gagged  
Comedy by arrangement  
with Glorious Management)**

Stephen Carlin returns to the Fringe with observational comedy about gambling and addiction,



**SNAP OF THE DAY: Fraser Millward's coach driver may have lost his passengers, but you'll find his show at Just The Tonic . Photo: Kat Gollock**

both as a serious problem and in everyday situations. How many risks would you be willing to take? This theme allows him to talk through parts of his life, comparing life as an adult with childhood. Carlin is as charming as he is funny, maintaining the audience's focus and keeping the show flowing. At the same time, while the show is about chance and risk, the act is not exactly ground-breaking. There's a sense he's playing it safe, mostly sticking to routine and family-friendly material. This isn't necessarily a bad thing though, as Carlin does present a well-rounded, funny and entertaining show.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 26 Aug (not 7, 14), 6.00pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Julian Joseph]

**Ain't It Awkward  
(Harriet Dyer and Freddie  
Farrell)**

What do you get if you cross a Brummie who's just become a parent and an erratic ex-partying Cornishman? This of course. 'Ain't It Awkward' is funny because it has just the right combination of incidences that the majority of the audience can relate to, combined with stories you can't help but feel are solely relevant to the comedians. Freddie Farrell is a likeable character who represents the adolescent teenager in any man forced into responsibility, discussing his abnormal behaviour in mundane

situations with a cheeky sense of pride. Harriet Dyer bounces about the stage, reliving her wilder days and cracking jokes that have you laughing in dismay. A show with very complementary characters, which feels anything but awkward.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, until 25 Aug, 3.45pm.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Grace Brennan]

**53 Minutes About 52 Sheep  
(Pustelnik and Bispebjerg  
Comedy Corner)**

Despite the name, this show doesn't actually have much to do with sheep. Instead, Danish comic Valdemar Pustelnik (a name he believes is responsible for making him "grow strong") incorporates a range of comedy styles to both shock and entertain. He begins as a fairly likeable stand-up, discussing his frustrations with women, love of cake and lumberjack appearance; but then takes a rather steep turn, delivering one-liners that have the audience unsure of how the offensive and graphic material was meant to be relevant. Pustelnik is funny, but it seems he lacks the ability to carry off such dry jokes with excusable cheek. He's talented at setting up gags, but the suspense is unnecessary when the punchline is barely noticeable.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until Aug 24, 1.15 pm.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Grace Brennan]

**Shirley Gnome  
(Heartchoke Arts)**

This is everything you want from a late night comedy show; frivolous, embarrassing and simply brilliant. Hailing from Vancouver and equipped with the voice of a goddess, the burlesque comedy singer-songwriter takes the audience on a musical journey, with the running themes of sex and toilet humour. Glittered up, wearing a pink hat and shining brightly on stage, Gnome shows that she doesn't take herself too seriously with her pixie-like, naughty numbers about periods and anal sex. She takes a lot of her song-writing influence from country music, and at times it is difficult to hear such a stunningly beautiful voice singing about farting and tampons, but maybe that's the whole point. Definitely not one for the easily offended!

Underbelly @ Cowgate, until 25 Aug, 10.20pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Shiv Das]

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

## AI Lubel Is Mentally AI (EMX Management Presents)

Although labelled as comedy, this strange hour is closer to a one-man show, as Lubel presents us with an extreme version of himself to talk us through his life. Playing on the self-righteous, self-indulgent image that many comedians present, he deludes himself into thinking the audience want to know every detail about AI Lubel. With a very dry and monotone delivery, his material largely focuses on his mother's obsession with him, giving us some entertaining anecdotes and pushing our good humour to its limit. Finishing with a song and dance, he presents us with "the real AI Lubel". Divisive, this was a very clever and well-structured show- it will either leave you in stitches, or just disturbed.

Just The Tonic At The Caves , until 25 Aug (not 13), 10.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 [Christopher Spring]

## The Oxford Revue: With Bits (Oxford Revue)

Fragmented, fast-paced, though at times forgettable, this well strung-together series of sketches and comic abstracts occasionally leaves you hanging without a laugh, but moves on to the next premise so quickly that you don't really notice. Promoted on the names of alumni whose influences are largely absent, this traditional revue show takes a tried and tested stable of comic characters and

puts them through the motions. The self-assured enthusiasm of the performers carries the weaker material through, and the longer sketches are a showcase for some more ambitious writing. The casual blasphemy and nudity thrown in towards the end is a bit perfunctory, but doesn't detract from the bulk of the show being harmless, silly fun.

Underbelly, Cowgate until 25 Aug (not 12), 3.20pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Joe Abel]

## Big Comedy Lunch (Barry Ferns)

This free show introduces you to some comedians you might otherwise not have stumbled across. Hosted by Greek comedian Katerina Vrana, her comedy centred around her homeland, the deficit and her equally unruly hair and family life. First in the showcase was German comedian Christian Schulte-Loh. Expect a few jokes about his height, and lots about how German he is - some more risqué than others. Next, an excerpt from Giada Garofalo's dark storytelling show, drawing on her Italian heritage for subject matter. Finally, Kate Smurthwaite completed the afternoon's European comedy tour, with some gentle humour and biting political satire. At times the show was uneven, but Smurthwaite, a genuine highlight, made it well worth watching.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage until 25 Aug (not 13), 1.15pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Elizabeth Jewell]

## The Bear Pit Comedy Podcast (Bear Pit Comedy/PBH's Free Fringe)

While most comedy showcases just have a few comedians perform extracts from their shows, 'Bear Pit' is a show in itself. Ewan Raffles opened interviews with "so you've had one, even two star reviews," or "some people might struggle to call what you do comedy". And every time a comedian mentioned they were performing at a paid venue, the audience would give an enthusiastic standing ovation and proceed to take their shirts off... get it? This has the basic format of a showcase/interview show, but it's really just an excuse to take the piss. I can't say "recommended" is the right word, as this show is certainly not for everyone, but the deadpan humour and surreal atmosphere are strangely hilarious.

Southside, until 24 Aug (not 14), 12.55pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Julian Joseph]

## Faux Latino Show Pony (Jacob Edwards)

Deranged, bizarre and completely unhinged, Jacob Edwards' show is unlike many that you'll see at the

Fringe. If all that madness could be harnessed for the duration of the performance, then he'd be getting rave reviews everywhere. Unfortunately, at present, Edwards only lets the audience see his brilliance in certain, undoubtedly hilarious, moments. Some of the characters, notably an inexperienced stand-up, were overplayed a little bit, whilst others weren't given enough attention. Nonetheless, Edwards clearly has talent and managed to whip up a frenzy in the incomprehensibly sparse venue. If he can refine his comedy and build on what talent he already has, then I expect him to be doing big things in the future.

Assembly Hall, until 26 Aug, 7.45pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

## Comedy Death True Horror Stories from the Circuit (Javier Jarquin / PBH's Free Fringe)

Certainly a good idea in principle, there was something grossly endearing about listening to comics recount their less successful gigs. For the most part, this show was enjoyable, if not slightly pedestrian. Steve Bugeja told his stories with refreshing humility, whilst Shane Mauss' anecdotes were rather insane, involving a horror-story tour across Texas. The reality that the majority of the comedians faced was that it was their lack of talent, as opposed to circumstantial factors, that had led to disastrous performances in the past. As a result, whilst told in humorous fashion, a lot of these 'horror stories' weren't that horrific at all. Nonetheless, the format was clever and the guests change everyday, so expect something new. And fortunately, there was no heckling.

The Dram House Upstairs, until 24 Aug (not 12, 19), 3.15pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

## Jigsaw - Jiggle It (Avalon Promotions)

Back with a high-energy show, tightly packed with witty sketches and new material, Jigsaw's third Edinburgh run is sure to be as successful as the previous two. The sketches are very short (sometimes lasting less than a minute) and the jokes come rapidly, so make sure you've had plenty of coffee beforehand. Some scenes are based around a single idiom or gag, so they don't develop much, but the rapidity of scenes keeps the audience's attention and stops this becoming a problem. The performers have a great rapport, both amongst themselves and with the audience. They're not afraid to be silly and they move skilfully from character

to character - a brilliant show, full of harebrained ideas.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 26 Aug, 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Victoria Beardwood]

## The Half Naked Chef

Expecting 'Miss Behave', I'm confronted with an Eric Idle lookalike instead. Wearing nothing but red briefs and an apron, this man, known as Stampy, is very much a half naked chef. The next hour is a series of genuinely bizarre moments, as he gyrates in the shop front window and accosts people on the street. He demonstrates his cooking prowess with a selection of vegetables and astonishing violence. He won't try convince you how good his food tastes, he'll force someone in the audience to try - the poor guy next to me did not seem to enjoy his Irish trifle. If you're not convinced, wander past Bob's Bookshop between 9 and 10pm to get a taste of what's on offer.

Heroes @ Bob's Bookshop, until 26 Aug, 9.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Samantha Strachan]

## Gary Delany 2: This Time It's Not Personal (CKP)

Gary Delany, as seen on TV, is the king of the one-liner. As the title of his show tells you, his gig will not take you on a journey and it will not deal with his problems through comedy; it simply isn't personal. Delany is more than just a pitching machine for gags however; he alternates his rhythms with a bit of observational stuff every now and then and also experiments with mime, although results may vary. He's happy to acknowledge that he's a bit immature, and as a result, some of Delany's jokes will make you shake your head and cringe. Even so, he'll get you in the end, as this hour of hilarious wisecracks brings out the childish joke teller in all of us.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 25 Aug (not 12), 9.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Alice Harrold]

## Improvabunga - Some Sort Of Improv Show (Watch This Improv Troupe)

Prepare for genius, drama and deranged hilarity as Watch This invite you to follow them down the improvised rabbit hole that is 'Improvabunga'. Each night six performers spontaneously drag a play (whose title, location and genre are chosen by you) from their imaginations onto the stage. An outstanding display of speed, wit and collective intuition results in a show that's raucously funny and consistently entertaining. This troupe excels in crafting whatever's thrown at them into a lucid tale with mad-cap coherence. As I watched

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**The world is a big hot mess - so maybe it's time for some good ol' fashioned wisdom**

a wild western romance based in the Northern Hebrides unfold, and as the first notes of 'Caber-Tossing Man' tinkled in, it struck me that you couldn't make this stuff up. Oh wait...

theSpace on the Mile, until 24 Aug (not 11, 18, 25), 8.05pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Pollard]

## THEATRE

### Sans Salomé (Fourth Monkey)

On a stage as almost as blank as a new piece of paper, Oscar Wilde and his modern counterparts write their stories. The play explores the treatment of homosexuality in both the 19th Century and the present day, making some profound connections between the two eras. 'Sans Salomé' is sublimely staged; the hubbub of the chorus acts as a time machine, transporting you from one period to another, and the almost empty stage actually holds a lot of opportunities for creative expression. The only real problem is that the show fails to totally capture Wilde's wit and charisma, but perhaps that is the point: intolerance and prejudice reduce people to ghostly shadows of their former selves.

theSpace on Niddry Street, until 24 Aug, 5.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Melissa Steel]

### Fourplay (New Celts Productions And Lady Muck Productions)

Rather than delving into the heart of modern relationships, 'Fourplay' tinkered around the edges. The strong acting was perhaps diluted by a feebler script, with a plot revolving around a couple who no longer communicate with each other. Their predicament was moving at times, but ultimately failed to prompt much sympathy. The metatheatricality of an affair between two actors piqued interest, but the third relationship

was just bizarre. Jumping from raunchy to poignant to humorous, 'Fourplay' showcased an array of acting skills against a great soundtrack. Alan McKenzie was credible as Tom, provoking laughter with his character's occasional insensitivity. Though the ending was uninspiring and the scripting sometimes dropped to mediocrity, this was still a harmlessly enjoyable production.

theSpace on the Mile, until Aug 23 (odd dates only), 2.10pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Sophie Baggott]

### The Trials And Tribulations Of Mr Pickwick (Nigel Nevinson)

This polished solo show tells of the many tribulations and eventual trial of Mr Pickwick. Recounted from his cell in a debtors' gaol, it's a surprisingly light and humorous tale of how he got there. Mr Pickwick is a honourable elderly gentleman, comical and almost caricature-like in his naivety and good intentions. The accomplished Nigel Nevinson also plays all the other characters, with just a few extra props. An escalating series of misunderstandings and mishaps ends in a hilarious trial by jury. There are several very funny scenes, but the pace can sometimes be a little slow and the disasters predictable. However, the ending imparts an unexpected but important message about charity. This gently comic play is good old-fashioned entertainment.

Hill Street Theatre, until 25 Aug (not 13), 2.15pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Isobel Steer]

### Inspector Norse (LipService Theatre)

Enjoy knitting? Then this unquestionably is the play for you. With a large woollen set and props, the LipService duo are in their element on stage - spoofing Swedish crime thrillers, responding well to the audience and generally delivering a humorous performance.

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**The RSC olympic cultural offering continues to enchant**

Maggie Fox and Sue Ryding have undeniable comedic chemistry, but at times the jokes and performances were overshadowed by the spectacular stage aesthetics. It is also fair to say that some of the cultural references and general humour will appeal more to an older audience than it does to a younger one. But, for the simple fact that a backdrop and a car made of wool is a pretty impressive sight, this production definitely merits a visit.

Assembly George Square, until 25 Aug (except 11, 12, 19) 4.20pm.

tw rating 3/5 | [Rory Morgan]

### The Six Wives Of Henry VIII (Living Spit and Bristol Ferment in association with Makin Projects)

This show is framed as a triumphant "fuck you" to a one-star review of a previous production, by a pedantic reviewer offended by historical inaccuracy after historical inaccuracy. As a result, in this production, inspired by the lives of Henry VIII and his six wives, characters communicate on mobile phones, compete on 'Blind Date' to win Henry's affection, and get hit by buses. With little to no actual historical research, Howard Coggins (Bristol Old Vic) and Stu Mcloughlin (Kneehigh) offer up a magnificently riotous production, demonstrating how great history is when you ignore the boring old facts and just write what you think probably happened. Backed by a live soundtrack and education-through-song, 'Six Wives' is wondrous.

Assembly George Square, until 26 Aug (not 13), 4.35pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Immi Calderwood]

### Solomon and Marion (Baxter Theatre Centre and Assembly)

This powerful play, like much Post-Apartheid South African fiction, asks whether history has left a rift that can't be healed. The young Solomon holds on to hope

for the future, contrasting with the ageing Marion who has lost belief in progress. Solomon fears Marion is wasting away, perhaps due to her fears for South Africa's future. The performances demonstrate how people talk when they still remember being kept apart. Solomon perceives racism when Marion addresses him as "my boy", while she is ashamed by the notion of her superiority when he calls her "miss". The play carefully allows some humour into this serious subject, though it remains fiercely unafraid of looking at the ongoing reality of life in South Africa.

Assembly Hall, until Aug 26 (not 12, 19), 2.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Michael Black]

## WORDS & EVENTS

### Ghost and Torture Tour (Auld Reekie)

You may think that going on a haunted tour during daylight isn't scary. You're wrong. Really, make sure you go with someone willing to have you constantly gripping their arm. It begins with an above ground venture down the Royal Mile, and it's surprising how much history the everyday streets have to offer. You find yourself confident that the hour won't be terrifying at all... until you enter the underground vaults. In the dark, damp conditions with only a small torch for light, the guide recounts past groups' experiences and chilling stories that have you shifting your feet nervously. Even as a sceptic it's difficult not to feel uncomfortable in the eerie environment, and even harder to sleep later that night.

Auld Reekie Haunted Underground, everyday, 7.00 pm.

tw rating 5/5 | [Grace Brennan]

### INFO

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