

ThreeWeeks IN EDINBURGH



Bathtime and bedtime at the Fringe

Guest Editor
Camille talks to
Tim Key and Bagpuss

PLUS we chat to
Le Gateau Chocolat



ALSO INSIDE THE THREEWEEKS 2011 WEEK THREE/FOUR ISSUE: The Noise Next Door, Adam Riches, Brett Goldstein, Amanda Palmer, Barrowland Ballet's Natasha Gilmore, Space Venues' Charles Pamment, ThreeWeeks' recommendations for the Festival Of Politics and lots and lots and lots and lots and lots of brand new reviews

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14th	Camberley Theatre	7.30pm	01276707600
15th	Kings Theatre Portsmouth	8pm	02392828282
16th	Hayes Beck Theatre	8pm	02085618371
17th	Brighton Theatre Royal	8pm	08448717650
19th	Oxford New Theatre	8pm	08448471585
21st	Manchester Palace Theatre	8pm	08448472277
22nd	Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall	8pm	08703207000
23rd	Chesterfield Winding Wheel	7.30pm	01246345222
24th	Grimsby Auditorium	8pm	08448472426
25th	Glasgow Kings Theatre	7.30pm	08448717648
27th	Birmingham New Alexandra Theatre	7.30pm	08448472302
28th	Leamington Spa Royal Spa Centre	7.30pm	01926410410
29th	Southend Palace Theatre	8pm	01702351135
30th	Stevenage Gordon Craig Theatre	7.45pm	01438363200

OCTOBER

1st	Northampton Royal & Derngate Theatre	8pm	01604624811
3rd	Dartford Orchard Theatre	7.45pm	01322220000
4th	Worcester Swan Theatre	8pm	01905611427
5th	Stafford Gate House Theatre	8pm	01785254653
6th	Wimbledon New Wimbledon Theatre	7.30pm	08448717646
7th	Reading Hexagon Theatre	8pm	01189606060
8th	Liverpool Empire Theatre	8pm	08448472525
10th	Blackpool Grand Theatre	7.30pm	01253290190
11th	Peterborough The Broadway Theatre	7.30pm	08448500850
12th	Ipswich Regent Theatre	8pm	01473433100
13th	Bedford Corn Exchange	8pm	01234269519
14th	Newcastle Journal and Tyne Theatre	8pm	08444939999
15th	Stoke-On-Trent Victoria Hall	7.30pm	08448717649
18th	Doncaster Civic Theatre	8pm	01302342349
19th	Leeds City Varieties	7.30pm	01133917777
20th	Burnley Mechanics	8pm	01282664400
21st	Cheltenham Town Hall	8pm	08445762210
22nd	Worthing Pavilion Theatre	7.30pm	01903206206
25th	St Albans Arena	8pm	01727844488
26th	Folkstone Leas Cliff Theatre	8pm	08448471776
27th	Cambridge The Junction	8pm	01223511511
28th	Newark Palace Theatre	8pm	01636655755
29th	Torquay Princess Theatre	7.30pm	08448472315

NOVEMBER

2nd	Harlow Playhouse	7.30pm	01279431945
3rd	Derby Assembly Theatre	7.30pm	01332255800
4th	Carlisle Sands Centre	8pm	01228625222
5th	York Opera House	8pm	08448472322
6th	Hull Truck Theatre	8pm	01482323638
8th	Yeovil Octagon	7.30pm	01935422884
9th	Bournemouth Pavilion Theatre	8pm	08445763000
11th	Croydon Fairfield Hall	8pm	02086889291
12th	Swansea Grand Theatre	7.30pm	01792475715
13th	Preston Charter Theatre	7.30pm	01772258858
14th	Barnsley Civic Centre	8pm	01226327000
15th	Middlesbrough Town Hall	8pm	01642729729
17th	Bristol Hippodrome	8pm	05448713012
18th	Leicester Demontfort Hall	8pm	01162333111
19th	Hastings White Rock Theatre	8pm	01424462288
23rd	Swindon Wyvern Theatre	7.30pm	01793524481
24th	Jersey Opera House	8pm	01534511115
25th	Jersey Opera House	8pm	01534511115
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let's dish out some fringe affection...

Welcome this week's ThreeWeeks Guest Editor Camille O'Sullivan

“Welcome, welcome to my issue. I'm sure the lovely folk at ThreeWeeks are now despairing they asked me to be a Guest Editor, as I sit here typing outside in the lovely grassy Meadows a day behind the deadline, suffering from lack of sleep because of wherever I was till 4am this morn... I just remembered I was dubbed Spanish Panda for hours, I need to retrace movements and find out why, but in the meantime...

Captains log: Day 19, due to high-octane madness of Edinburgh, very close to horizontal now, can't talk, can't walk, loss of rational thought... but must write... ahhh!

My choices for interview were based on a simple emotional response; me having great affection for both Bagpuss and Tim Key. I was reminded of this while

wandering around this beautiful city, whose austere stone grey façades are presently tarted up into a colourful kaleidoscope of graphic calling card posters: LOOK AT ME, look at my STARS, PLEASE COME TO MY SHOOOOOWWWW, PLEASE! It always interests me why certain posters jump out, and theirs both did their job and drew me in.

One because I'm a big child at heart: Bagpuss was presented very boldly, a pink, furry cat, very cute, and just plastered with stars.

With the other, the schizophrenic side of me liked the eerie, morbid darkness of an anti-Edinburgh poster; not a laughing comedian in sight, but subtle, artistic, using a small delicate font, and basically saying "not bothered if you look at me, or come to my show". I didn't recognise his altered black demonic eyes at first, but then realised it was the much fêted Tim Key; I don't think his poster even mentioned (or the font was too small) that he won the prestigious

Edinburgh Comedy Award in 2009, or the numerous other accolades.

I liked the attitude of this poster. It reminded me of the Tim I met and who interviewed me for radio. It was one of the loveliest, kookiest, most charming interviews ever, and was made even more memorable when he kindly wrote a poem for me, and made some drawings too. Yes, he is a star, and not just the on-stage kind.

Though I have been intrigued by both, I haven't had the pleasure to see them live on stage, but have heard about their brilliance from many, and loved what I saw on TV over here (I only get the Irish channels at home, so I feel like I'm making massive exciting discoveries when watching telly in the UK!)

This is my seventh year singing in this city. The poster may be bigger, the flat bigger, the venue bigger, but the artist feels just the same as the first time: excited, terrified, exhausted – but like a magnet drawn back annually. I fell in love

with this city straight away, it felt as though I was walking in a 3D Escher painting carved out of one rock. I still stare at the Castle in awe, still get scared when fighter jets grace the skies for The Tattoo, still get lost on, over, under bridges, still enjoy promenading Scottish seagulls.

Having left a career in architecture behind, I thought running away with the circus was a great idea and that's when I first came to the lovely Spiegeltent in 2004 and performed in a new show called La Clique; so lucky.

I hope you enjoy my wee interviews, and that you get to see the shows while you are here! And send some affection to tired performers: we're nearly there. Much gratitude to the audience: thanks for coming to our shows. And if it's raining, best to just go with it, and dance in it.

”

Camille O'Sullivan's show 'Feel' is on at Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 9, 15, 17, 18, 24, 27), 8.00pm (9.00pm), £16.50 - £18.50, fpp198.

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“There will be one night when, for no apparent reason, a whole room of people will turn up to see the show with seemingly no idea of who or what they’ve bought tickets to”

Piff The Magic Dragon on his Festival bad bits and best bits – www.threeweeks.co.uk/piff

THE CARO HELLO

Well, look at that. We made it. To the final week of the Fringe.

And as in any other year, we begin it with mixed emotions; sadness that it's all over, but relief that we get to go and sleep for a week. Well, that's how I feel anyway, and I'm pretty sure that lots of other Festival people out there feel that way too.

You bank holiday weekenders, coming up here with your high levels of energy and will to take in as many shows as possible, don't shout too much, because lots of people are very tired and have a wee bit of a headache. And if that is you, remember to go and see something by someone you've never heard of before, because that's what this Festival is all about.



This week's guest editor is, of course, the lovely Camille O'Sullivan, and she's interviewed two really cool... erm... entities this week. I say entities instead of people because one of them isn't quite human. No, not Tim Key – though she has interviewed him as well – I'm talking about that saggy cloth cat Bagpuss.

Other interviewees this week include the ludicrously talented Adam Riches, the also brilliant Brett Goldstein, the amazing Amanda Palmer, Le gorgeous Gateau Chocolat, and the clever Natasha Gilmore, creator of 5/5 dance/physical theatre piece 'A Conversation With Carmel'. This week's 'festival person' is Charles Pamment of the Spaces venues. Plus The River People – who are staging 'Little Matter' at Bedlam Chambers – fill us in on their show's journey to the Fringe, and improv troupe The Noise Next Door tell us their best and worst bits of Edinburgh. We've also got some tips for things to see at the Festival Of Politics, and of course, lots and lots of reviews.

And just before I go: thanks, everyone, for reading our paper this Festival, thanks to all our contributors. Bye for now, and have a good year.

Caro Moses, co-Editor, ThreeWeeks

FRINGE PEOPLE

spaces filled with fringe goodness

Charles Pamment first ran Venue 45, one of the original Fringe venues, during August 1995. He now heads up one of the Festival's biggest venue networks, but ensures the Fringe spirit of his original base lives on. ThreeWeeks found out more.

TW: When did you set up your first Fringe venue?

CP: In 1995 at the enigmatic Venue 45, a lovely church hall on Jeffrey St, and one of the original Fringe theatres. Proper proper Fringe.

TW: Why did you decide to expand into other performance spaces?

CP: The reason was simple: demand. We've always had lots of returning companies, and over time needed more space to accommodate everybody. We expanded slowly at first though, by simply adding our 40 seat development space at Jury's Inn, next door to Venue 45. But we've expanded a little more in recent years and made quite a jump in 2009 by adding the five theatres at Spaces@ Surgeons Hall to our portfolio.



Photo: Karl Collock

TW: When did you start using the 'Space' name? Was it important to you that there was one name to unite your venues?

CP: 2008 I think, we wanted to unify the spaces a little I suppose. It makes things easier, logistically, for everyone - us, the performers, audiences - if there is a common name. And it gives the companies an identity to be proud of during their run on the Fringe.

TW: You've managed to keep all your various venues in one part of town. How do you go about looking for new spaces?

CP: That's a good question! We have been offered venues as far away as the Meadows, but I think we hang onto the Royal Mile for two reasons. Firstly, I suppose, it's logistical. We started here, theSpace@Venue45 is just yards from the Mile, and it's useful for our production teams to work in close proximity to each other. So naturally as we've expanded we've picked up venues close to our hub. The second reason is that for me the Mile is the true heart of the Festival, especially for theatre; just wander up the street and see the hordes of people looking for shows. As a performer it's an absolute dream to have your venue located within a few seconds of where you promote your production. In essence, in my view it's the best location on the Fringe, especially for new and emerging theatre.

TW: How do you select the shows that perform at your venues?

CP: We believe very much in the ethos of the Festival as a platform for the unknown artist, and as a stage for emerging and developing performance art. This is the very reason it evolved and has been running now for some 65 years. With that in mind, we work hard to embrace the open access policy of the Fringe and will always try to programme our theatres accordingly, working with both experienced professional companies and Fringe virgins alike. We tend to veer away a little from the dreaded 'selection' word - the diversity our theatres enjoy is a credit to that policy, and

three Fringe Firsts in three years ticks the high end box too.

TW: How has the Fringe changed in the time you've been running venues, and is it better or worse for those changes?

CP: Indeed yes. There are more beer gardens for starters! It's changed, and it's a bigger animal. And the biggest growth of the 2000s was in comedy. I must admit, I always get a little annoyed when those from afar refer to this event as a 'comedy festival', especially as when they do they are mainly thinking of stand-up comedy. Stand-up is great and we have lots in our programme, but anyone who comes here will see how this festival is so much more than just the comedy, and will hopefully lose themselves in that diversity too.

TW: Despite now overseeing quite a venue empire, you seem happiest in the cafe of your original space, Venue 45, that converted church hall. What's the appeal?

CP: It's a funny one - lots of people ask that! The other day an old lady gave me a 50p tip when I sold her a cup of tea in our makeshift café, so perhaps that's it! Of course our base at Surgeons Hall has a pretty swanky box office and front-of-house area, and we're very proud of that. But you know, Venue 45, it's proper Fringe, the real deal, a church hall buried in the side of the Royal Mile with a draughty box office, lime green café walls and one loo. Its walls whisper of Fringes gone by, because it's been a venue since 1948. And everything happening at the venue spills out into the café, we see first hand everything from the trials and tribulations of the student farce to the decadence of a five star show. It's just a simple church hall split into two for a month, but it represents all things special about Fringe. I feel at home there.

Check out the full Spaces programme at www.thespaceuk.com

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Backhand with C theatre
Images

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Daniel Cainer
More Jewish Chronicles

4-29 Aug at 8.20pm



Marathon House Productions and
4th Wall Productions
Rogerandtom

21-29 Aug at 2.15pm



Class Stage Productions
Dances for Wolves

4-29 Aug at 9.30pm



Backhand with C theatre
The Velveteen Rabbit

3-29 Aug at 11.00am



Kipper Tie with C theatre
**The Mole Who Knew
it was none of his business**

3-29 Aug at 10.00am



Backhand with C theatre
Sideshow

3-29 Aug at 3.20pm



Class Stage Productions
On The Bench

4-29 Aug at 8.30pm



C theatre
**Red Riding Hood
and the Wolves**

3-29 Aug at 12.15pm



C theatre
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3-29 Aug at 1.15pm



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BEST BITS, BAD BITS: THE NOISE NEXT DOOR

The Noise Next Door are wonderful, it is official. ThreeWeeks say so. And here they are, to offer their worst – and best – Edinburgh experiences.

THE BEST BITS:

No Second Glances: "Oh look. A six foot black man in a glittery, purple, lycra one-piece with a dragon mask on his head and bananas for shoes". Wear this in London and you'd be stoned. But during the Fringe people get away with being batshit crazy and it is accepted as the norm.

The Audiences: It's such a pleasure to play to intelligent, comedy savvy audiences day in and day out. People have journeyed to Edinburgh specifically to see shows - they

want to be there and they want to see you. You know that they're just going to 'get it'. As in the get the show, not a punch in the face.

Nyam Nyam: The finest Italian eatery outside of Italy. On our very first day here this year we walked passed Nyam Nyam's spot on Nicolson Square to find it was no longer there. Granted he was drunk, but one of our members shed genuine tears in the middle of the road. Luckily we found out that this delectable establishment has moved to South Clerk Street and continues to provide infectiously tasty and affordable homemade pastas, pizzas, risottos and ice-creams. Go there – your mouth will applaud you.

THE BAD BITS:

The Heat: How can a city so cold and wet have venues hotter and stuffier than the core of the sun? It's ridiculous. Unless you're lucky enough to play the EICC on a regular basis, you and your audience are destined to sweat over each other for 60 minutes. There is of course a solution. If you're not bothered about

anyone hearing your show, you can turn on 19 whirring fans and a clunky air conditioner from the 1980s.

The Name Game: What's your name? What's his name? Is he a name? I know that name. Should I know your name? I'd like to be a name. Name, name, name, name, name, name. Namedrop,

namedrop, namedrop. Who cares?

Umbrellas*: Stupid umbrellas. With their sharpened metal teeth bobbing up and down, digging into the heads of unsuspecting comedians and making it impossible to pass. IT'S NOT EVEN RAINING. They don't work in the wind, are nigh on impossible to

share and make people dawdle. Wear a coat, grow some balls and let your head get damp.

*These are not the views of all of The Noise Next Door. Just the little Red One who is affected by umbrellas predominantly due to his lack of height.

The Noise Next Door's show 'Their Finest Hour' is on at Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug (not 10, 17), 4.30pm (5.30pm), £9.50 - £12.00, fpp127.



Photo: Richard Dyson



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COMEDY REVIEWS

Simon Munnery: Hats Off For The 101ers, And Other Material

Munnery is confusing to behold at first, arriving on stage with a top hat spewing bubbles and a portable sound system, leaving his audience a little perplexed. Yet, this unconventional beginning slips away to reveal some excellent material. His monologues in particular stand out as tightly scripted gems; one, from the perspective of Sherlock Holmes, reveals him to have fluked all the cases before descending into a mad, surreal scene of people chanting "science, science, science". The show lacks a stable structure, instead seeming to be a run-through of his recent writing – indeed, if it wasn't for the strength of this writing, the show would have seemed a mess. And once the audience digest the entrance, the laughs are constant throughout.

The Stand Comedy Club, 1 - 29 Aug (not 2, 15), times vary, £7.00 - £10.00, fpp151. tw rating 4/5 [jfb]

Meditation Ruined My Life

Sam Brady / PBH's Free Fringe

Sam Brady understands the fine art of good story-telling, and has had a blessedly poetic life which he shares entirely with us. We sit, appropriately, on huge floor cushions underground, and hear his story of giving up everything to adopt a semi-monastic lifestyle with a mixture of amusement, sadness and shared joy.

Hearing a man from Wigan speak about enlightenment and oneness with the universe is funny in itself, his accent only highlighting his overall amiable nature. Though delivery lacked at times and some jokes simply fell flat, the story was well told and fascinating; here's a man who's learnt much along his journey, and shares his lessons with a lot of poetry and little pretence.

Medina, 6 - 27 Aug, 1.20pm (2.20pm), free, fpp117. tw rating 3/5 [ja]

Fear Of A Brown Planet

Fox In The Snow

Comedians Aamer Rahman and Nazeem Hussain create an hour of laughter for a predominately white audience as they give their personal accounts of what life has been like growing up Muslim in an Anglo-Christian Australia. From a purely comedic standpoint, these two are brilliant: their routine flows naturally, the audience adores them, and many of the laughs are well-earned. But one would expect slightly more from a show with such a title. It was a little too middle-of-the-road; the jokes had a heartfelt cynicism, but never truly pushed any boundaries. As smart and captivating as it was, the routine felt self-conscious, politically oversimplified and banal. However, the laughs alone make it an enjoyable night out.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, Aug 3 - 29 (not 15, 22), 7.15pm (8.30pm), £7.50 - £9.50, fpp74. tw rating 3/5 [ae]

“Every year we come back to try and get tickets to see the Tattoo but always miss out. This year we just decided to get tattoos of the tattoo instead”

Meet The List Operators - www.threeweeks.co.uk/thelistoperators



Q&A: ADAM RICHES

One of the Fringe’s favourite character comedians, Adam Riches has been garnering award nominations and four and five star reviews all over the place. ThreeWeeks tracked him down to ask a few pertinent questions about his career, his brand of comedy, and why he keeps coming back to the Fringe.

TW: How and why did you get into comedy?

AR: The why is because I was never much good at anything else! The how is that I started writing comedy plays during my time at University and then took some of the characters out onto the circuit to see what would work and what wouldn't work on the way to shaping together some full shows.

TW: You are known for your character work. Do you ever do straight stand-up? Would you like to?

AR: No, never. I'm only interested in character work.

TW: What do you think makes a good character comedian? Do you make a point of seeing other shows by character comedians?

AR: Just keeping it simple and making it funny. I think it's important for an audience to get what it is you are and what it is that's funny about you as quickly as possible, so that they can relax and be taken anywhere you want. I absolutely make a point of seeing other acts. There's so much good stuff out there that it'd be ridiculous not to.

TW: How is this year's show going? Can you tell us a bit about the characters?

AR: The show is going well, thank goodness! People seem to be responding to it and the reviews have been good, so it's lovely to perform in that environment. There are only five characters in the show, not including lizards. A super-charged Agent, a super-damaged Swingball Champ, a super-loud Actor, a super-grizzled Monster Hunter and a super-weird MasterMind.

TW: You've done some TV work. How does it compare to live performance? Do you aspire to a TV career?

AR: TV is fine but doesn't have the freedom of live performance. The

more money there is involved in a project, the more people there are involved in the decision making and so seeing as I pay myself nothing for my live work I can make as many mistakes as I like! Hopefully I can find a way to develop a TV project that gives me as much freedom to bugged up as much as the Festival does, cos that's how you get better.

TW: How many years have you been doing the Fringe? What do you like about it? What keeps you coming back?

AR: This will be my fifth solo show in a row and my sixth festival in total. I love it here. The chance to perform your own material every day to a crowd of comedy savvy audiences for a month is a hard thing to give up... even though it nearly always kills me and milks me dry!

TW: Which other shows are you planning to see/have you seen this year?

AR: I've only seen a few so far. Humphrey Ker, David Reed, Colin Hoult and Idiots of Ants, all very excellent for very different reasons. I'm planning to see Fraser Millward, Delete the Banjax, Tom Rosenthal and the mighty Nick Helm in the last week.

Adam appears in Bring Me The Head Of Adam Riches at Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug, 4.45pm (5.45pm), £8.50 - £11.00, fpp52.



COMEDY REVIEWS

Kelly Kingham And Guy Manners: Infectious – Free

Tank Productions / PBH's Free Fringe

An hour of deliciously dark comedy was delivered by two very different, but equally good, comedians. First up was Guy Manners, cutting a trim Pierce Brosnan-esque figure in his suit; his set began with how tough it is being so attractive. His sheer arrogance - he claimed to have seen more flaps than Postman Pat - was absorbing, and he soon had his audience on side, with people literally crying with laughter by the end of his set. Kelly Kingham was a large departure from Manners in both look and material; the unassuming blonde used disgusting images and his awkward look to put his audience on edge. This paid off in the punchlines, as he too had people crying with laughter.

The Voodoo Rooms, 6 - 27 Aug (not 9, 16, 23), 8.40pm (9.35pm), free, fpp104, tw rating 4/5 [jfb]

Out – But Not On Good Behaviour

Dylan Bray, Jonathan Bentata And James Gill

The show's description makes clear that these three comedians don't want to fill their flyers with cut-and-paste phrases such as "laugh out loud" and "must-see" - one would hope that it would imply a break from the conventions of comedy within their show. Sadly, the absence of such phrases was more to do with the absence of such qualities. Jonathan Bentata requested that people not clap his entrance to the stage, creating a cold room that even the best comedian would find difficult to warm up - and he is not the best comedian. Once into their sets Bentata and Bray were both just about bearable, but Gill died on stage,

and blamed the audience rather than his material. Charming.

The Jazz Bar, 15 - 26 Aug, 5.30pm (6.30pm), £5.00, tw rating 2/5 [jfb]

Pete Firman: Jiggery Pokery

Phil McIntyre Entertainments By Arrangement With Objective Talent Management

Blink and you'll miss it - a single hour of this man is not enough. The ultimate cheeky chappy of magic wears his arrogance like a cape as he ends tricks with the occasional cry of "OMG". Cards, guillotines, flying objects - all are brought together to wow us. It's worth getting to the King Dome early to get a seat near the front, since the wonder of witnessing a table flying mere metres from your face is hard to beat. He's at pains to point out that today's audiences are hard to amaze, but with a character as strong as Pete Firman behind the tricks, they are not only pulled off with perfect ease, but made captivating and funny.

Pleasance Dome, 3 - 28 Aug, 8.30pm (9.30pm), £10.50 - £14.00, fpp133, tw rating 4/5 [ja]

TW RATINGS

- 1/5 Bad
- 2/5 Mediocre
- 3/5 Good
- 4/5 Very Good
- 5/5 Brilliant

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When someone chooses the moniker *Kunt And The Gang* – even with the ‘k’ – I think it’s fair to say they’re going just a little bit out of their way to court controversy.

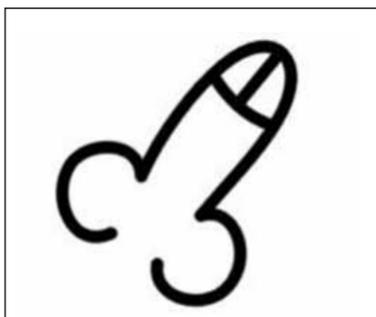
So, it seems, job done for the comedy music outfit from Basildon, because – albeit according to their own press release – they’ve put a few Fringe noses out of joint by encouraging their audiences to stick promotional cock stickers on other comedian’s posters.

Anyone wandering around the Fringe’s George Square/Bristo Square hub last weekend can’t have failed to see the cock shaped stickers, complete with a QR code that took smartphone users to a webpage containing the single word ‘Kunt’. The aim was to promote the free KATG show appearing as part of the Free Festival this year.

As KATG fans placed cock stickers on the posters of other Fringe comics, the comedy music man behind the promotion claims he received complaints from various Fringe promoters, legal threats from Underbelly, a telling off from the Fringe Society and a visit from Edinburgh Council officials. Though, he says, they did struggle to keep a straight face as they told Free Festival staff that they’d been forced to spend the day “pulling off over 100 cocks around Edinburgh”.

And some comedians do see the funny side of having large white cock stickers placed on their posters, while one key Edinburgh comedy promoter – The Stand’s Tommy Sheppard – reportedly said he’d be happy to see the cock stickers on his venue’s publicity. With chatter about what KATG themselves are trying to dub Cock-gate spilling over onto the net and into the media, some are speculating that the act is now favourite to win the Malcolm Hardee Cunning Stunt Award. Certainly award organiser John Fleming has noted the stunt on his blog.

So, while Cock-gate is earning KATG as many enemies as friends, it could all still result in a happy climax for the Kunt. By which I mean he could get an award to take back to Basildon.



COMEDY REVIEWS



5/5 SHOW: The Ginge, The Geordie & The Geek Best Of 09/10

Who knew that a Ginge, a Geordie and a Geek constitute the perfect recipe for totally brilliant, unrelenting hilarity? As well as their sell-out ‘All New Show’, these comedic actors present this showcase, celebrating the best bits from their previous fringe successes and, despite revisiting old material, their energetic exuberance ensures that the show remains wonderfully fresh. Longer scenes and recurring characters allow the trio’s incredible acting abilities to shine, while shorter sketches with sharp one-liners exemplify just how intelligent and sharp-witted they are as writers. And then come the truly outstanding sketches, where all their talents – as singing, dancing, and comic geniuses – combine to produce unparalleled entertainment. Hunt down a ticket and prepare to have your laughter stamina tested.

Just The Tonic At The Caves, 5 - 28 Aug (not 17), 7.45pm (8.45pm), £8.50 - £12.00, fpp83. tw rating 5/5 [kc]

10 Films With My Dad

Aiden Goatley/PBH’s Free Fringe

Family man Aiden Goatley takes us on a journey through his life, recounting his relationship with his father and how they bonded through films. A heart warming story about communication, “or lack of it,” ‘10 Films With My Dad’ teaches us that our time together is precious, so why not sit back and enjoy a film together every once in a while? The show also features clips of Goatley’s own ‘remakes’ of his favourite movie scenes including ‘Jaws’, in which family dog and star of the show Kimble gives a fantastic interpretation of a fierce shark amongst the waves of Brighton’s seaside. ‘10 Films With My Dad’ is a touching tale coupled with moments of good old family friendly humour.

Ryan’s Cellar Bar – Ryan’s Bar, 6 – 27 Aug, 8.45pm (9.45pm), free, fpp157. tw rating 4/5 [ng]

Russell Kane: Manscaping

Avalon Promotions

Russell Kane is in the middle of a crisis, both in his life and his career. A difficult year, beginning with the collapse of his marriage, has left him struggling with his identity and looking, in his words, “like the aborted triplet of Jedward”. These problems form the crux of his high energy, fast paced show, where he relates the various things that have happened to him in the past 12 months, as he tries to decide what direction his life will take. At times he is very funny, but unfortunately the show is fairly inconsistent, with large amounts of self-searching by Kane which, while probably quite therapeutic for him, doesn’t always lend itself well to comedy.

Pleasance Courtyard, 12 - 26 Aug (not 22), 8.50pm (9.50pm), £15.50 - £17.50, fpp145. tw rating 3/5 [im]

Tom Toal And Joe Wells: Rom-Coms And Revolutions

Tom Toal And Joe Wells

What do you get when you mix romantic comedy with political satire? Just that, only it actually goes better together than you may think, and it’s all down to the comedians themselves. Tom Toal is a cute bearded softie who generates as much ‘awww’ as he does laughter, and his tales of past love tickle the hearts and funny-bones of the largely female audience. On the other hand, Joe Wells is a Marxist who is not afraid to say what he thinks of today’s politics; he hates Tories almost as much as he hates the BNP, but, overall, remains a rather jolly character. The two comedians gel well together making for one very entertaining show.

Laughing Horse @ The Three Sisters, 10 - 28 Aug, 2.20pm (3.20pm), free, fpp161. tw rating 4/5 [ng]

Joe Fairbrother: Characters

Joe Fairbrother

With Fairbrother’s eclectic mix of weird and wonderful personae, ‘Characters’ may not be overly hilarious but is definitely entertaining. Whether portraying the delicately patronising remarks of a gypsy-hating farmer or relating the over-zealous and unabashed ramblings of a swingers club organiser, Fairbrother certainly possesses a great flare for acting, and even engages the audience well by involving them in his sketches. There was a lot of laughter, yet there was a sense that the audience enjoyed the show for the characterisation itself, rather than for side-splitting humour. There’s absolutely nothing wrong with that: it’s a different type of comedy and Fairbrother is a very talented performer in his own right.

Just The Tonic At The Caves, 4 – 28 Aug (not 17), 1.20pm (2.20pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp99. tw rating 3/5 [ng]

500 years Of Scotland’s Dark History

Edinburgh Dungeon

Descend into the dark and let some of the city’s most hard-working actors take you through Scotland’s grizzly history. A 90 minute tour takes us from the old courts to Robert Knox’s autopsy table via the cave of Sawney Bean, and out through the much-advertised Extremis ‘Drop Ride to Doom’. The dungeons are blessed with Scotland’s history of cannibals, murderers and ghosts, but while these stories are told there’s an awful lot of standing around to be done, allowing our heart-rates to slow just a little too much at certain points. That said, the actors manage to blend their tales with black humour and safety announcements very well, and show that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.

The Edinburgh Dungeon, 5 – 29 Aug, 10.00am (7.00pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp75. tw rating 4/5 [ja]

James W Smith: Living In Syntax

James W Smith / PBH’s Free Fringe

It is hard to classify James W Smith’s stand-up technique, and it seems that the schisms which result from his fluctuating style are something he continuously struggles with. There appears to be no fully satisfying way for James to seamlessly progress from his repetitive and unoriginal jokes concerning East Anglian localisms and puns, to his brilliantly frenzied

criticisms of political figures and intelligent commentaries on how context so drastically alters the meaning of words. It is in these deeper explorations of language and outrageous attacks on contemporary culture that his potential is revealed and thus, by honing or even ditching the more flippant introductory gags, James could well end up with an impressively insightful and consistently entertaining show.

The Royal Mile Tavern, 6 – 27 Aug (not 16), 6.10pm (7.10pm), free, fpp95. tw rating 3/5 [kc]

Kevin Cruise

Assembly

To say that I was brimming with cynicism as I took my seat in the Bosco tent in George Square, would have been something of an understatement – most likely due to recalling the terror of Kevin Cruise’s performances on that televised atrocity that is ‘Britain’s Got Talent’. But if you allow him to take you along as an interactive pastiche of crappy Cruise entertainment, it actually works surprisingly well as a family show, with the host able to delight the kids with silly tricks and songs, getting grown-ups to dance like idiots, and winking knowingly at the rest of the audience all the while. It’s perhaps a little over-priced, but it’s hardly a bad way to spend an hour with the family.

Assembly George Street, 3 – 29 Aug (not 15), 3.50pm (4.40pm), £8.00 - £12.00, fpp105. tw rating 3/5 [rss]



5/5 SHOW: Wilfredo: Erecto!

Matt Roper

By turns disgusting and arousing, Wilfredo doesn’t cease his insatiable womanising throughout the night. The bucktoothed Spanish singer works the room marvellously. First he talks to the girls at the back of the room, then the girls at the sides of the room, and then the girls at the front of the room, each receiving their own individual song. As a character, he is an excellent creation; despite his hacking cough, his occasional phlegming, and his too-tight trousers, he is utterly charming and uplifting. I was rarely without a smile, and, leaving the show with a flower in hand, I couldn’t help but feel happier for it. Go see this show and take everyone you know with you.

Underbelly, 4 – 28 Aug (not 16), 11.30pm (12.30am), £8.00 - £10.50, fpp165. tw rating 5/5 [jfb]

5/5 SHOW: Cariad Lloyd: Lady Cariad’s Characters

Cariad Lloyd / PBH Free Fringe

It’s standing-room only to see ‘Lady Cariad’s Characters’, and, from the moment Cariad Lloyd appears on stage, it’s easy to see why. Vivacious and simply fizzing with energy, Lloyd parades before us a side-splitting stream of comic creations. From the eponymous Lady Cariad to loveable mass-murdering transsexual Cockney Sam, Lloyd’s characters are original, brilliantly drawn and hilarious. In case you thought she was a one-trick-pony, Lloyd disproves this by bantering with the audience with witty ease and improvising a gloriously dirty rap based on an audience member called Shirley. She’s achingly funny throughout, and it’s really only a matter of time before Lloyd makes it big. Go and see her now while you can still afford it.

The Voodoo Rooms, 6 - 27 Aug (not 17), 3.55pm (4.55pm), free, fpp54. tw rating 5/5 [ab]



"I love stand-up as well – but with cabaret there's greater variety and much greater emotional range. I want to be made to cry as well as laugh."

Catch up with ThreeWeeks favourite Dusty Limits - www.threeweeks.co.uk/dustylimits



Q&A: BRETT GOLDSTEIN

Festival veteran Brett Goldstein is back in Edinburgh to tell the general public all about his time running a strip club in Marbella. It all sounds pretty intriguing, so ThreeWeeks investigated. Well, asked a few questions, anyway.

TW: Your show has a very interesting theme. Tell us more.

BG: The show is about the time when my dad had a mid-life crisis and bought a strip club in Marbella, instead of a new car, and how I ended up running it. It was a strange time, particularly as none of us had any experience of this sort of world before, and my dad had assumed that all businesses run the same. He had previously run bookshops and assumed it to be a similar practice... Just instead of selling books, you're selling dances.... The one thing he did not count on, was that when you open a strip club, no matter how clean you run it, it will attract the underworld. It will bring them right to your door whether you want it or not. The show is very much about this world, and about what happens when you live in this sort of environment for too long. But, you know, funny.

TW: It sounds like the experience you had might have been, well, traumatic, to an extent. Is this show cathartic for you? Where's the humour?

BG: The experience had its fair share of trauma I suppose, but on the other hand, it was a hell of an adventure and I feel very grateful

for having had it. I suppose there was some catharsis in the actual writing of the show; I have been mulling over this story for ten years, so to get it out feels good I think, but at the same time, it also makes me very anxious. There are things I talk about in the show, and people, that may not want to be talked about. It is why I set up a very strict 'circle of trust' at the beginning of every show. As for the funny, well, look, once you get past the darkness, with a little perspective the whole thing is utterly ridiculous. It's like a farce. It's about a series of stupid men who wandered blindly into a fantasy world they had literally no idea about and how they stumbled about causing trouble and destruction and trying not to get killed. Its like 'Fawlty Towers' with tits.

TW: Do you make any general moral judgement about strip clubs, or do you only approach it in the context of its effect on you?

BG: I can only talk about it in relation to my experience. Strip clubs are individual. Some have nicer atmospheres and environments, and some are fucking dark hell holes. I have no moral objection to strip clubs, I completely understand why they exist and what purpose they purport to serve. I did however, find, in my experience, that strip clubs don't bring a lot of happiness to anybody. They are weirdly conservative places that pretend to be transgressive. In a normal club you can kiss a girl and connect and fall in love (go to Espionage any night of the week) but in a strip club all you can do is watch a made up version of that life. I think it becomes damaging to the psyche after a while. If all you are doing is playing a game, then when is it ever real? I saw too many women corrupted and saddened by the hollowness of it, and too many men turned strange by it. But that was just what I observed... I'm not the president.

TW: We hear you switched from acting and writing to stand-up – what made you change? Can you see a time when you'll go back to acting or writing?

BG: I still act and write on occasion. I love stand up because it is the most pure of all of them. You can just do it. You don't need anything. You don't need equipment, you don't need a manager, you don't need producers, you can just turn up. You can think something in the afternoon then say it that night. You'll probably die on your arse with it but at least you got it out of your system quickly. I first tried

stand up cos it was the thing I was most scared of. I thought I would do it once and never tell anyone. My first gig went well so I carried on. The next thirty gigs were fucking disasters, but I had that first one to remember which kept me believing that one day it could happen again. Fingers crossed!

TW: Steve Bennett's review of the show suggests that it would make a "cracking film". Have you thought about writing a screenplay of it?

BG: I have so many stories from that time that I have often considered it in many other mediums. Truthfully, I have been approached by a couple of producers who are interested in the film rights. But, honestly, I am so jaded by the industry; when they offer to buy the rights, instead of thinking "YEAH!", all I hear is, "How would you like to spend four years in development while people you don't trust take the heart and soul out of your idea until it's a husk of a thing you no longer recognise which they'll either abandon, or make for no money in a way that makes it look utterly abysmal and leads everyone you know to not be able to look you in the eye again? Would you like that? And here, here's no money for the privilege!" I love doing the show because love it or loathe it, it is my version, and it is so simple to do. This is the show I wanted.

TW: Are you enjoying Edinburgh? Is the show going well?

BG: This is my ninth time in Edinburgh and I am addicted to it. It is a big part of my life. I feel exhausted by it. It's like an abusive parent. I keep coming back in the hope that one day it will show me some love. The show is going well, thank you. I enjoy it most of the time except for when they are quiet and I want to cry inside. The very best show I have seen is Gregory Charles; I have literally seen it every night since I first saw it and will keep going until he, or I, die. It is unbelievable... When I grow up I want to be Gregory Charles. As for non music recommendations, may I suggest the fabulous Lou Sanders in 'How To Be Awesome: An Introduction'. She is fucking funny. When I grow up I want to see Lou Sanders.

Brett appears in 'Brett Goldstein Grew Up In A Strip Club' at Pleasance Dome, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15), 5.30pm (6.30pm), £7.50 - £9.50, fpp52



Photo: Stuart Armit

Craig Shaynak, Jane Russell and Dan Taylor present

free festival 2011

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MOOSE AWARDS



The winner has been chosen for the first ever Amused Moose Laughter Awards, sponsored by 2entertain. The winner was chosen from ten finalists who appeared at a special event at the Bongo Club on Sunday.

Unlike the more established Amused Moose Laugh Off Awards, which are looking for brand new stand-up talent, the all new Laughter Awards celebrate more established comedians, though those who are yet to have their own DVD release. The hope is that, aside from the five grand prize, Soho Theatre showcase and free DVD recording, all of which sounds rather fine to start with, that finalists and winners will come to the attention of promoters, producers and commissioners who can help them launch the next stage of their comedy careers.

A judging panel made up of such people selected ten finalists from online footage and Edinburgh shows, the ten finalists being Tony Law, Milo McCabe, McNeil & Pamphilon, David Morgan, Luke Wright, Paul McCaffrey, Beta Males, Jeff Leach, Jessica Fostekew and DeAnne Smith. But on the big day it was Law who triumphed overall.

Commenting on the first ever Laughter Awards, and the final hosted by Andi Osho, Stuart Snaith, MD of 2entertain, told ThreeWeeks: "The energy and excitement that Andi created in the Bongo Club and the phenomenal performances by all the finalists, who 2entertain will now be talking to over the next couple of months about possible DVD deals and support, was palpable. And the enthusiasm of a committed industry panel from as far apart as Edinburgh and Melbourne, who have been viewing online the deluge of Amused Moose Laughter Awards entries from early July and then live once the Fringe started, is to be commended and demonstrates the international respect that the Amused Moose Awards hold, and we are delighted to support these extremely thorough talent searches".

The winner of the aforementioned brand new talent Laugh Off Awards has also been announced by Team Amused Moose, with Pat Cahill taking that prize.

INTERVIEW

the key to a poetic fringe: camille meets tim

Tim Key has been a ThreeWeeks favourite for years. So we were all delighted that this week's Guest Editor Camille O'Sullivan decided to interview him for us. Yay.

CO'S: I was delighted to see you return to Edinburgh. I discovered that on the cover of The List, and then I saw that poster. I'm loving the poster, subtle, enigmatic, strange... not a forced smile in sight (it's an almost anti Edinburgh image). But what is that demonic black eyes thing all about?

TK: The plan was to make me look as sexy as possible and it ended up not working out that way. I don't look as sexy as my manager suggested I would. It's a disaster. Also, my mum came up and saw the poster and told me off.

CO'S: Which brings me to the title of the show title 'Masterslut'... explain ...?

TK: I did a show in 2007 called The Slut In The Hut. That was because I was in The Pleasance Hut, and Slut rhymed with Hut. In 2009 I called

my show The Slutcracker, which was a play on words, mixing Slut into Nutcracker. Now I have painted myself into a corner branding-wise. Again, my mum is struggling with it.

CO'S: After your brilliant success here and everywhere, is there more pressure when you return?

TK: I felt the pressure in the first week. It's a pretty fiddly show and it took a few goes to make it work. I guess there's a bit more expectation than usual but to be honest I always feel complete and utter horror in the first week of Edinburgh. It kills me. I can barely walk or eat. I look ill and keep having to stop and lean against shops or trees. Once the show started to find its feet the pressure dissipated. Now I am enjoying doing it.

CO'S: I'm close to horizontal from this marathon run, how have you been coping with the madness?

TK: Baths. Long, hot baths. And I have a bit of fish every week.

CO'S: Do you think Edinburgh audiences differ to others?

TK: I don't think so. I took my show on tour last year for the first time and expected it to be a little different everywhere I went. It really wasn't. Edinburgh, Lancaster, Brighton. It's all the same. If you do the show right, it should end up okay. Don't get me wrong though, I love Edinburgh audiences. They're incredibly beautiful and intelligent people.

CO'S: How do you prepare for your shows?

TK: I try and be at home for a couple of hours before my show. I sort out all my poems and put them where I want them in my suit. Then I have

a long bath and listen to the radio. Usually Test Match Special, but if it happens to be Robbie Savage then I'll go with that. I'll then eat some mince or biscuits and walk across the meadows. I live half an hour away and it is perfect. I can clear my head, angle my umbrella into the rain and keep healthy as I approach the arena.

CO'S: Are you inspired by music? Who is your favourite artist? (Sorry I would hate that question myself, but I can see why they ask it!)

TK: I am REALLY into a band called Leningrad. They're a Russian ska band and I can't be without them. I always have them playing as the audience are coming in and there are little nods to them in my show. My last show featured an artist called Ishtar. I couldn't have done that show without her. She lifted me and my show every night. I owe her.

CO'S: Is there a song that sums up your current show?

TK: There isn't one song that sums it up but I am enjoying some of the classical music I use. I used to really like one bit of music by Haydn when I was little. It reminds me of my dad making elderberry wine. Now I have that in my show. It makes me feel nostalgic when it comes on, which suits the show.

CO'S: I hear you released an album of music and poetry recently - sounds great, tell me a bit about that.

TK: My management and I decided to make an album and they decided it should be on vinyl [the obsolete format] and should be done in collaboration with a string quartet on a boat. It was a fragile project

that felt like it would collapse several times but somehow didn't. I'm planning on buying a record player so I can listen to it and drink tea. It's available on CD now, too. But I know I need to front up and take the lead and listen to it on vinyl.

CO'S: What about the poetry - what poets inspire you?

TK: I'm not so into poetry. I like John Hegley, and Shakespeare had his moments. I also really like the poem about the plums by William Carlos something or something Carlos Williams. That one's brilliant. I'm not sure it's Williams, but it's definitely Carlos.

CO'S: Who do you want to see here at the Fringe? Seen any good shows?

TK: I always love Colin Hault and I haven't seen his show yet. I also need to see Nick Helm. I saw Andy Zaltzman the other day. I've never seen a whole hour of his, which is ridiculous. His show was great. Proof again that his is a better comedian than he is a footballer by a staggeringly long way. Alex Horne's show is obviously ideal. And Sheeps are good. Very good.

CO'S: What's the best show you have seen?

TK: This year: Sheeps.

CO'S: Where do you get your suits?

TK: Marks & Spencer. They cost fifty quid and are machine washable and can go in a tumble drier. On the flipside, they look awful.

CO'S: Beer or wine on stage?

TK: Beer for me, every time. Reinvigorating, refreshing, restorative. Wine sends me to sleep, and there are bits in my show when I just simply need to be awake.

CO'S: What's the most impressive heckle you've heard? And what was the best heckle reply?

I have a bath in my show and someone started going at me pretty hard about the water temperature. I put her straight. The temperature of a poet's bath water is his business and his alone.

CO'S: Ask yourself a question you would have liked to be asked! (Sorry, I'm new to this!)

TK: "Do you remember the first time you met Camille O'Sullivan?" Yes, I saw her on stage in Edinburgh in 2009 and melted. I pursued her afterwards and touched her hand. These things stay with you.



Tim appears in Tim Key: Masterslut at Pleasance Dome, 3 - 29 Aug, 9.45pm (10.40pm), £11.00 - £14.00 fpp159.

Q&A: LE GATEAU CHOCOLAT

He's a star of La Clique, he's played the Royal Albert Hall, and he used to be head boy when he was at school. Le Gateau Chocolat tells us all about his show, his time in Edinburgh, and how he feels about cake.

TW: Tell us what happens in your show, and what it hopes to achieve.

LGC: You get to meet the man behind the lycra, the maquillage... I introduce you to Le Gateau Chocolat through song and anecdotes; we literally spend the hour in each others company. The show's main thrust is to celebrate the things that make us the same. We look at the each other and are immediately reminded of our differences - race, height, size, sexuality - but the show hopefully transcends our differences, celebrating our humanity. I would also hope the show challenges preconceptions of drag queens, gay men. So come, let us while away the hour, laughing, loving, crying and reaffirming.

TW: When you were a child, is this what you wanted to do when you grew up? How did you get into it?

LGC: Not at all, this is one of the best mistakes I've ever made. I love every minute of it but I never planned to do this. I studied law and as far as I knew, a lawyer was what I was going to be. But life sometimes throws you lemons, and this is rather delicious lemonade, effervescent and everything.

TW: This is your first Edinburgh, isn't it? How are you finding it? Is the show going well?

LGC: It's going very well (touch wood). We're now in the final week and it does feel like I've been here for twelve years. I love being surrounded by other performers and sponging up the atmosphere, but that said, this festival is a bit carnivorous: not only do you have to do a show nightly, but you've got to sell it. Flying, guest spots, interviews etc. Though necessary, incredibly taxing at times. It's been a wonderful yet humbling experience.

TW: How do you like Edinburgh?

LGC: I love it. Its a right of passage

for performers around the world. It's been humbling. The reaction has been heartening, from that of the 11 year old boy who whispered that he loved it and ran off, to the Spanish man who didn't speak much English but managed to say "I didn't understand everything you said but I understand your heart". I've LOVED Edinburgh.

TW: We read somewhere that you were head boy at your school. Is that true?

LGC: Yes. Head boy indeed. Not just a pretty face [ha ha ha ha].

TW: Do you actually like chocolate cake?

LGC: I love chocolate cake for the many purposes it serves. From being incredibly indulgent sometimes to being the comfort you need after a hard day or a bad occurrence. I LOVE IT!!!

Le Gateau Chocolat appears at Assembly George Square, 5 - 25 Aug, 9.15pm (10.15pm), £11.00 - £14.00, fpp12.



READ MORE

ThreeWeeks.co.uk/
legateauchocolat



CABARET REVIEWS

The Return Of The Pink Sinatra

Scott Free

Doing things very much his way, Scott Free is a natural showman with a powerful voice, an impressive range - and a sparkly pink jacket. Earning its listing as Cabaret with cheeky banter and a nice line in mildly uncomfortable audience interaction, the show may not suit the most straight-laced tastes, but it's more about the music than the gimmick. From soaring opener 'Feeling Good' to obligatory finale 'New York, New York', Scott sings with heart and charisma. Supported by tight session band The Pink Pack, he swaggers through tunes by diverse swing and easy listening artists, really shining on Sinatra. This may not be what Ol' Blue Eyes had in mind, but it's a fine, flamboyant tribute.

St George's West, 5 - 9, 11 - 16, 18 - 23, 25 - 29 Aug, 6.55 pm (8.05 pm), £7.00 - £12.00, fpp14. tw rating 4/5 [df]

Candid Cabaret

Sapphire Rooms Productions

In the murky depths of a strip club, we are treated to a veritable smörgåsbord of Fringe performances. From Japanese men in morph suits recreating movie characters to spaghetti-eating opera singer Miss Louisa... what can you expect next? Well, Candid Cabaret offers a wide ranging variety of entertainment. A highlight for me was a Spanish flamenco quartet that had the whole room stomping their feet, followed by a stunning belly

dancer who shook her hips to devastating effect, but audiences can also expect contortionist accordion players and a selection of comedians. Perhaps the only let-down in this potentially brilliant night was the compère, who left the audience nonplussed at times, but the variety of acts was brought to a superb conclusion by the dreadlocked bluegrass band that played us out.

Sapphire Rooms, 14 - 25 Aug, 7.00pm (10.30pm), £6.50 - £8.50, fpp9. tw rating 4/5 [fm]

Abi Roberts Takes You Up The Aisle

Abi Roberts

Any hen party visiting the Fringe should make this show a top priority. With wedding jokes going beyond your typical Wills&Kate humour, and a slew of personal anecdotes, Abi is funny and endearing, leaving out the real filth in favour of spot-on impersonations of Marge Simpson and Celine Dion. Clad in a wedding dress and sporting a puff of blonde hair, she belts out songs about her gay best friends and cyber love. The only single male in the audience, I was surprised to find myself enjoying it, whilst the large groups of women in the audience sipped white wine and sang along with smiles on their faces. I suspect that the future brides among them were having a particularly good time.

The Voodoo Rooms, 3 - 28 Aug (not 8, 22) 6.50pm (7.50pm), £7.00 - £10.00, fpp8 tw rating 4/5 [tw]

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Photo: Mark Conway

river people on the theatre

River People are in Edinburgh this year staging their play 'Little Matter' in a rather interesting way. Our reviewer called it "a delicious, dark chocolate of a show" that beguiles the audience with "whimsical humour and charming melancholy". So, of course, we wanted to hear more from them: here, they tell us how the show came to be, and how the company ended up using a travelling wagon theatre. Cool.

“ This year at the Fringe has been by far the most challenging, worrisome, expensive yet powerfully inspirational experience we've had as a company. We find it really important to create shows that come from an honest place. In 2007 'The Ordinaries' was about my experience of abuse in my family, from 2008 - 2009 'Lilly Through the Dark' explored Claire's feelings of grief after the passing of her father. Each time when we take a show up to the fringe we are welcomed like nowhere

else. Since 2010 we have been working on 'Little Matter': it began as a story called 'AngelRust', then was picked up by the Edinburgh International Festival to be developed. Now this is one of the final versions. It is a story about change and potential, it's the story of this chapter in our lives, about growing up and facing one's inner demons. To tell it we use live music, puppetry and honest storytelling. And bringing it to the fringe, this testing place where we get the chance to share our work with so many people, where our company can grow, has felt like a significant chapter in that story.

Ever since we teamed up with Spinney Hollow, a woodland project in Fair Oak, Hampshire, and shared the dream of a travelling wagon theatre, it has been our joint goal to bring it to the fringe. Thankfully The Bedlam Theatre have been utterly amazing in helping us to realise that goal. Our venue is a bow top wagon with a fold out stage under a tent with material walls, all lit by candle light. It's a space that we can call our own, a little bubble away from the bustle of other fringe venues where we can create an atmosphere and welcome each individual into our world. It's small and intimate, there might be the sound of sirens from the street, the distant overspill from the comedy venue beneath us, the roar of crowds, a chorus of birds, the sound of rain, of the wind. But it's all

“STUNNING...TAUT, VICIOUS, HILARIOUS.” ★★★★★ THE SKINNY

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THEATRE REVIEWS

The Nose

Fat Git Theatre

Pervading this play is a strong energy – the constant complex movement of the large cast and the accompanying music power the audience through what's an otherwise vapid production. The plot ostensibly concerns a Russian major who finds his nose missing; spotting it posing as a government official he gives chase. The play is humorous and well produced – the stage is impressively framed by a large white sheet which is stained with blood, snot, and other fluids that seep and merge together. However, it signifies nothing beyond, perhaps, an allusion to the innards of a nose. In this manner, although it is an enjoyable performance, there is no greater significance to the play's events, and it ultimately feels devoid of a core.

theSpaces on North Bridge, 15 – 27 Aug, 7.05pm (7.55pm), £5.00 - £7.00, fpp284. tw rating 3/5 [jfb]

The One Hour Plays

Matey Institute

Mismatched garments and materials adorn the stage, creating a bohemian feel to this show. This is enhanced by the eccentric cast, especially Brendan Murphy, who is brilliant as the frenetic director trying to organise and manage his small theatre company. During the hour, the objective is for the audience to help the cast devise and create a ten minute, three act play, and, truth be told, the production process is equally - if not more enjoyable than the end result. At times things do seem to get quite manic, but this just adds to the gathering momentum and anticipation

as to whether the team will actually pull it off. This is a truly unique and very entertaining experience, well worth seeing.

Underbelly Cowgate, Aug 15 – 28, 12.00pm (1.00pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp285. tw rating 4/5 [st]

...In For A Pound

LIP Theatre Company

The most tragic thing about this production is how good it could have been. The tale of one man's quest to buy a pack of cigarettes leads him to the seedy underbelly of the city, a pair of karmic hit-men, and a statuesque crime boss – all of which is written with melodramatic humour and naturalistic asides. The brilliance is, sadly, lost in the performance. It is a production devoid of energy; jokes do not fall but rather drift downwards to their final resting place, while all that comedic dialogue is simply too nervously delivered to be funny. Too many long-winded scene-changes break the flow and leave actors shuffling on-stage, apparently terrified of making eye-contact and failing to provide the vivacity this play so desperately needs.

Sweet Grassmarket, 15 – 29 Aug, 1.00pm (1.50pm), £8.00, fpp271. tw rating 2/5 [ja]



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Historical wagon

part of the experience, and everyone is in it together. And by the end, hopefully... usually... the audience are so much a part of the world that it doesn't matter. The venue that we have made is an extension of the show, an extension of our philosophy, that although entertainment is paramount, theatre should attempt to go further, it should provide an experience, that the audience should walk away with a thought, the gift of a moment.

And after the show there is no quick get out, no company queuing up waiting to get in, the audience can spend as much time in the space as they like. They can come and chat to us, hold the puppets and explore the wagon. This has been one of the most rewarding parts of the experience, getting to hear people's thoughts and allowing them as much time with us as they desire.

Our time at the fringe has been so affirming, we know now that this is how we want to present our theatre, this is the experience we want to provide. There is so much potential within it, just waiting to be realised.

River People are staging 'Little Matter' at Bedlam Chambers, 8 - 28 Aug, 1.00pm (2.30pm), £8.00 - £9.00, fpp275

MUSICAL REVIEWS



5/5 SHOW: Some Small Love Story

The Flanagan Collective
Spot-lit against a dark, naked set, four actors stand in front of you. The starkness of the stage is reflected not only in the starkness of their performance, but in the raw human vulnerability of the way their two stories unfold. This is beautifully acted and sung, and the witty realism of the script brings equally poignant laughter and tears; it's a whole rollercoaster of emotions that reflect the grieving process it describes. In a production this bare, every detail has been considered, and the result is tight, gripping and powerfully intense. Traditionally romantic, yet still honest and relevant, this reverberates with all your forgotten childhood notions and triumphantly displays the ageless quality of true love. Life-changing theatre.

C eca, 3 - 29 Aug, 9.30 pm (10.25 pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp233. tw rating 5/5 [ld]

Jet Set Go!

Go Fly Productions

It's a bumpy, bouncy, cheery take-off, with one cliché strewn after the other. And yet it's completely adorable! I never thought I'd like clichés so much! Meet the air crew: the rude Spanish Carmen - Julia, excuse me - and from Puerto Rico, gay first-class steward Ryan; the grumpy pilot; and the shy new stewardess. Four boys, four girls, all on their way to New York and back. They have twenty-four hours in the Big Apple, and elements of 'On The Town', Gene Kelly and Sinatra are easily found in the story, music and dance. Sweetly performed by the young cast, this is heart-warming and soul-refreshing, from set-up to take-off and on, landing smoothly ever after.

theSpace on Niddry St, 15 - 27 Aug (not 21), 7.00pm (8.20pm), £10.00 - £6.00, fpp226. tw rating 4/5 [vk]

Five Alive! The Musical

Five Alive - George Lakis and Andy Emeritz

Call me a terrible person if you must, but with comedy I'd rather wallow in the schadenfreude of failed expectations than root for plucky underdogs making a comeback. So, for me, it was disappointing that the narrative here focused almost entirely on fictional former tween sensation Five Alive only well after their fall from grace, when there would have been comic potential in seeing more of their hubristic demands during their period of success and then their downward trajectory. That gripe over with, the songs are really good and embarrassingly likeable, especially the one sung by the Europop outfit, Heartbrokers. Aside from the underdeveloped narrative, this show

celebrates the ridiculousness of eighties pop music pretty satisfyingly.

theSpaces on the Mile, 15 - 27 Aug (not 21), 10.00pm (11.00pm), £5.00, fpp75. tw rating 3/5 [km]

Pollyanna

Sky Blue Theatre

Pollyanna, the light hearted young orphan from America, hops over to stay with her strict old aunt from England and along the way enlightens the nearby residents as to how to live life with a smile. It's all simple fare with pantomime-like characters - the drunk vicar with a bright red nose, the twittering old women with humped backs - and bright costumes bringing the show to life with a cartoonish tweak. In contrast to the costumes, the singing from time to time falls short of being particularly rousing or memorable, on occasion being hard to hear, or simply being unnecessary. Still there's enough here to entertain - just not quite enough to make this so distinguished from the plethora of other musicals.

C, 21 - 26 Aug, 3:00pm (4:30pm), £4.50 - £7.50, fpp233. tw rating 3/5 [jc]



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5/5 SHOW: The Melody Blog

Pandora's Productions

Twins Melody and Harmony have been raised to speak through music, singing and guitar playing, respectively. Their evil father Vincent streams their lives through an online blog for profit, and without their knowledge, and Melody yearns for escape. Performed mainly in song, jumping between a press conference with Vincent, and snap shots of Melody's life, it's a funny, tragic, perfect marvel. Good musicals tend to be long, whereas this is great at half the length, and for such a short play, the characters are either well rounded or well played enough to give the plot an emotional punch. The songs are beautifully lyrical and span several musical genres, and the accompanying dances are energetically choreographed. There's simply nothing to complain about.

Zoo Roxy, 15 - 27 Aug, 6.30pm (7.30pm), £5.00 - £6.00, fpp228. tw rating 5/5 [klc]



5/5 SHOW: Nobody's Home: A Modern Odyssey

Grafted Cede Theatre And Theatre Temonin

Grant has returned from a tour of duty to his loving wife in body, but his mind is still struggling to slot back into domesticity, battling terrifying and shifting monsters in the effort to reconnect to his wife. This ingenious and grotesque piece of theatre is incredibly written and devised by the same talented actors who star in it, Will Pinchin and Dorie Kinnear. It is so cleverly and intricately managed that you believe anything could emerge out of the central bathtub, as Dorie Kinnear contorts herself into a myriad of characters. Ending with a climatic and cathartic flourish and a standing ovation from the audience, this review can't do coherent justice to this astounding and moving play.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 - 29 Aug (not 16, 23), 1.15pm (2.15pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp283. tw rating 5/5 [km]

CaLARTS Festival Theater - 8th Season on the Fringe!

<p>11:45 <i>dir by Leila Ghaznari</i> broken wing The love of two men - one American, one Iranian - for one woman culminates in a storming</p>	<p>16:00 19:00 CalArts Center for New Performance Daughters of a Cuban Revolutionary Written and Performed by Marissa Chibas</p>	<p><i>Flesh Eating Tiger</i> by Amy Tofic</p>
<p>INFINITE COAST'S 14:45 Hôtel de l'Avenir infinitecoast.blogspot.com</p>	<p>20:30 little eyolf a play by HENRIK IBSEN</p>	<p>The sold-out Fringe First 2010 nominee RETURNS! CalArts Festival Theater in association with Ines Wurth presents Silken Veils by Leila Ghaznari 5 Aug - 28 Aug 2011 no shows on the 20th or 21st 3:30 p.m. assembly GEORGE SQUARE www.assemblyfringe.com 0131 623 3030</p>

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THEATRE REVIEWS



5/5 SHOW: Sodom

The Movement

An updated retelling of the Earl of Rochester's notorious play, 'Sodom' is debauched, decadent and downright dirty. Not for those easily offended, this overtly sexual production cleverly sets the 'action' in a modern, media-frenzied world (sound familiar?) in which the King decrees compulsory sodomy. Hence the women of the land become increasingly frustrated; none more so than the neurotic Queen who, majestically performed by Caitlin Doherty, truly steals the show. Indeed, Rochester's words are reinvigorated by the fantastic cast who give an almighty performance. Visual aids accompany the action on stage, providing hilarious news clips (the dildo-microphone – genius) yet also, in the play's climax, astutely juxtapose the play with the world in which we live. Unmissable!

Zoo 140 Pleasance, Aug 14 – 29, 11.15pm (12.15am), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp300. tw rating 5/5 [st]

Inbetween

In House Writer

Vacillating between deeply affecting and deeply pretentious, 'Inbetween' is a mixed bag. Delving into the fractured psyche of hard drinking Jon Casey, the show presents an uncomfortable picture of inter-generational mental illness. Troubling, painful, bitter and sometime beautiful memories flit through Casey's mind as he struggles for sanity, and long running references reach satisfying conclusions. As well crafted as some scenes are, however, others are less so, with clichéd characters spouting intentionally over-complex dialogue, giving the impression that it's a show that thinks it's much deeper and more incisive than it actually is. Despite trying too hard to be clever, 'Inbetween' is, nonetheless, a good and thought provoking show.

C aquila, 14 - 29 Aug, 2.55pm (3.55pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp271. tw rating 3/5 [ab]

The Big Bite Size Breakfast

White Room Theatre's Bite Size Plays

Like stepping into a Michelin-starred restaurant, I found that meal-time meant show-time. Enjoying complimentary welcome croissants and coffees with 'Uncomfortable Silences' - a slightly unchallenging tomato soup kind of sketch - we then proceeded hungrily through the rest of the day's delectable menu. Alice Robinson and Sean Williams gave zesty performances in the wonderfully British and marmalade-like 'Vintage' and 'Transactions', making them memorable crowd-pleasers. Sketches performed by Andy Hutchison and Lisa Beresford generally had less edge, but when the four joined forces in 'The Key to the Mystic Halls of Time', breakfast was rounded off on a very high note. When next asked how I like my eggs in the morning, I'll reply, "With an hour of theatre, please".

Pleasance Dome, 3 - 28 Aug (not 16, 25), 10.30am (11.30am), £10.00, fpp243. tw rating 4/5 [pc]

Alice In Wonderland

Breakout Theatre Company

Alice has returned to Wonderland in many new adaptations of Carroll's classic, and each time the story has been slightly tweaked, changed, or modernised. This particular production perhaps takes its adaptation a little far with its inclusion of zombies. In this too-dingy studio, a group of adults perform the kind of physical theatre that would come out of a school drama class, and speedily-delivered lines are lost behind self-consciously twitching animal masks. Some clever continuations are a small saving grace - Dinah the cat, the secret of the Black Queen and questions of loyalty and morality are in the same vein as the original. But others, like the developing relationship between Alice and the White Rabbit, are a tweak too far.

C soco, 17 - 29 Aug, 10.00am (11.00am), £4.50 - £8.50, fpp237. tw rating 2/5 [ja]

Alphonse By Wajdi Mouawad

Richard Jordan Productions Ltd And Theaturtle In Association With Pleasance

Alphonse didn't come home from school today. His family are worried but Alphonse has bigger problems: together with his friend Pierre Paul René, he is in the midst of an adventure. This is the premise of 'Alphonse', a surreal, mystical journey into the imagination, beautifully performed by



5/5 SHOW: Titus Andronicus

Action To The Word In Association With C Theatre

An Elizabethan feast! Have it all: murder, rape, revenge, pies baked with blood. This is Shakespeare as it's meant to be: brutally funny, bloody gruesome and with lots of guts to spill. Action To The Word adapts the play in a raw straightforward way, showing how Shakespeare works without a big stage or too much sophisticated fuss about it. Faces in the audience grow pale as hands are chopped off, tongues torn out, and heaps of real looking blood is spattered all over the floor; there are roars of laughter when Titus mocks the Queen of the Goths, and tears sparkling in some eyes when yet another child is murdered. A gorgeously acted and staged gory gothic slaughter to indulge in.

C, 3 - 29 Aug (not 16), 10.15pm (11.35pm), £7.50 - £11.50, fpp304. tw rating 5/5 [vk]

Alon Nashman. Like a Grimm fairytale crossed with 'Where The Wild Things Are' and narrated by Lewis Carroll, it makes for a wonderful kind of nonsense. Nashman creates an entire world of characters just by altering his body language, often holding 'conversations' entirely on his own and with such conviction that it is easy to forget this is a one-man show. Kids will love 'Alphonse', and grown-ups ought to enjoy it too.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 28 Aug (not 17), 11.45am (12.45pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp237. tw rating 4/5 [eb]

Blood And Roses

Poorboy

An excellently produced audio tour that may be better suited to the stage, this recounts five stories from five generations and relates engrossing tales set in Russia and Scotland, about such topics as living in Leningrad during the Nazi siege, or Edinburgh in the 1940s. Whilst walking, you are led to rooms which are decorated to correspond to the story; however, frequently the connection is fleeting as the plot jumps to a time period unconnected

to the current setting; standing in a replica Russian snowscape while listening to a woman talk about the 1940s in Scotland is a little jarring. This could have been more delicately handled on stage - the robust story and strong actors would definitely survive the transition.

St George's West, 5 - 27 Aug, times vary, £10.00 - £15.00, fpp244. tw rating 3/5 [jfb]

David Leddy's 'Untitled Love Story'

Fire Exit Ltd

The play's climax is strangely moving and leaves a contemplative atmosphere; however, excessively artistic episodes - during which, for example, a large sheet is passed over the audience in an attempt to somehow heighten their sense of being in Venice - detract from the diverse but somehow intertwined stories told by individuals experiencing Venice over five decades. Directorial decisions include repeatedly plunging the stage into darkness and asking the audience to close their eyes in meditation, something which is rendered almost impossible due to the writing's complexity. cont>>

5/5 SHOW: The Alchemystorium

Gomito Productions

As with good espresso, sometimes the simplest things are best. Fringe fixtures Gomito brew up a rich blend of nutty physical comedy, smoothly delivered set-pieces and surprising poignancy, in the story of a café which caters to romantics. It's staffed by the lonely owner and her two bickering baristas, whose increasingly inappropriate workplace affair provides the comic and dramatic energy. The three accomplished performers convey a wealth of humour and subtle meaning through tiny gestures and uproarious sight gags. Every inspired idea is filtered to perfection and served with total conviction, making each scene an intense shot of warm feeling. If huge quantities of caffeine alone aren't keeping you going, you could probably live on theatre like this.

Bedlam Theatre, 15 - 27 Aug, 4.30 pm (5.30pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp237. tw rating 5/5 [df]



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PHYSICAL

DANCE & PHYSICAL THEATRE REVIEWS



5/5 SHOW: A Conversation With Carmel

Barrowland Ballet
A Conversation with Carmel features the oldest and the youngest performer at the fringe, and they both deliver astonishing performances. The oldest is magnetic 83 year old dancer Diana Payne-Myers, who astonished with her grace and control. The youngest, Otis Gilmore, is a baby. It's extraordinary how having an actual baby on stage captivates the audience. You almost felt sorry for the other dancers, working up a sweat in fantastically precise dance routines, while the audience nudged each other and whispered: "look! It's a baby!" They deserve recognition nonetheless. An investigation of the joy and embarrassment of families, age and youth, A Conversation With Carmel will have anyone who's experienced a large family reunion gaping in recognition. Magnificent.

St George's West, 19 - 28 Aug (not 24), £8.00 - £12.00, fpp169. tw rating 5/5 [nw]

Korean Drum - Journey Of A Soul

Kook Soo - Ho's Didim Dance Company
Building from the tiny tapping of sticks on stones to the huge freight-train rumble of massed drums, there's a dynamic sense of movement infusing this energetic ensemble performance. While their polyrhythmic percussion is passionate and absorbing in itself, the regular introduction of new instruments ensures the whole sound and feel of the show is constantly developing. Crisply choreographed dancers in vibrant traditional costumes provide a strong visual element, keeping things fresh with brief forays into gymnastic and ritual movement, an obligatory fan-dance and even some incongruous but impressive plate-spinning. Lovers of world music may well find this breathtaking; the wider audience will certainly be entertained by the colourful, crashing spectacle and the infectious carnival spirit on display.

Assembly Hall, 4 - 7, 9 - 14, 16 - 21, 23 - 29 Aug, 4.00 pm (5.00 pm), £8.00 - £16.00, fpp172. tw rating 4/5 [df]

Flamenco A3

David Coria, Flavio Rodrigues And Pedro Obregon
'Flamenco A3' provides a unique opportunity to experience Spanish dance at its finest without having to leave the city. The show kicks off with Flavio on the classic guitar, setting a particularly vivid ambience, and he is soon joined by Pedro, who offers evocative vocals. But nothing surpasses David Coria's masterful and zealous dance routine, which was figuratively, and to some extent, literally, groundbreaking. The fervour in his pacing, super-human steps was captured also in his eyes and sweaty complexion as he tapped and twirled his way onto the grand finale. Though I did find myself pondering about the prospects of adding a female dancer to the performance, it was, nonetheless, nothing short of spectacular. Olé indeed.

Zoo, 17 - 27 Aug, 7.00pm (8.00pm), £11.00, fpp170. tw rating 4/5 [ma]

Rock the Ballet

Assembly with Mel Howard and Collien Konzert
We are warned at the beginning of the show, "This is not your average dance performance." And it's true to some extent; the show mixes music from the likes of Queen and Michael Jackson with varied physical styles in an attempt

to cover all tastes. Balletic traditions are cleverly fused with elements from contemporary, jazz and hip-hop, all performed with aplomb by the impressively talented troupe. However, as a whole, the pieces seem unconnected and lack depth. The sole female dancer is overwhelmed in the face of the brazen masculinity dominating the show, and there's a particularly unforgivable piece involving inflatable sex-dolls and opera. Overall, the choice of music grates with the sophisticated talent of these dancers.

Assembly Hall, 4 - 28 Aug (not 8, 15, 22), 6.00pm (7.00pm), £14.00 - £20.00, fpp175. tw rating 3/5 [al]

The Tea Dance

Fly Right Dance Company
Set in a gloriously incongruous corner of the Palm Court, this exceedingly gentle introduction will delight and reassure even the most inexperienced dancer, though there is little opportunity for the more ambitious to challenge themselves. Whilst coming with a partner is advisable, a trio of girls were well accommodated as the dances were taught gradually from scratch, with professionals on hand if we required (or desired!) a more able partner. Indeed, what really shines through is the teachers' hospitality and their knowledge of the history of dance and commitment to sharing their enthusiasm. During the break, they pour cocktails, pass round canapés and compliment us on our skills, and for a moment we are transported to a more genteel era.

Pleasance Dome, 6 - 29 Aug (not 15, 22), 6.30pm (7.30pm), £7.00, fpp178. tw rating 3/5 [tfw]

Last Orders

David Hughes Dance Productions
Ferocious, savage, imaginatively bizarre, this is a performance infused with

simmering malevolence. Based on the mysterious Scottish cannibal, Sawney Bean, the piece interweaves crazy nightclub scenes complete with cheesy music with a dark underground world of unsettling paper animal masks in a series of striking hallucinations. Wisely director Al Seed decides not to depict the actual flesh-eating, limb-tearing action, preferring to leave the horror to our imagination, and this lends a disturbing subtlety to the tale. Each of the five talented dancers gives an impressive performance, fusing absurdity, vulnerability and brutality with elements taken from a range of dance disciplines. "Last Orders" physically conjures a horrific story which is at once accessible and strikingly expressed.

Traverse Theatre, 16 - 28 Aug (not 22), times vary, £12.00 - £19.00, fpp173. tw rating 4/5 [al]

5/5 SHOW: Ten

Dance4 presents Hetain Patel
This fabulous piece of theatre seamlessly weaves storytelling and music to create a humorous, engaging and refreshingly unpretentious interrogation of cultural identity. By posing the question of what might make him Indian, Hetain Patel explores how identity is created, whether by genes, language, rituals, or simply a sense of being connected to people in a significant way. Assisted by two excellent percussionist performers, Patel immerses us in the rhythmic vocabulary of Indian music, this element interspersed with heartfelt anecdotes and moments of simple visual beauty. The piece is exquisitely constructed, yet the colloquial delivery makes its complexity seem effortless, and means that its philosophy is never inaccessible. Book your ticket now for an unusual, fresh and honest work of art.

Zoo Roxy, Aug 21 - 28, 7.00pm (7.50pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp178. tw rating 5/5 [tfw]

5/5 SHOW: Sold

SOLD
Human trafficking is a difficult subject and so, although it deserves it, this production will never receive a standing ovation. A culmination of multimedia, dance and verbatim theatre draws us into dark tales of prostitution, slavery and oppression. The horrifying reality of what happens here in the UK made me cringe in my seat, at how little is generally known and how little is done by politicians, the police and, most importantly, the public. The statistics are depressing but there is hope; this mesmerising piece pulls the wool from our ears and our hands from our eyes. As the recent riots have shown, ignoring our problems isn't going to help anyone. Go and see this and be moved to action.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug, 11.10am (12.30pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp298. tw rating [5/5] [pr]

cont>> Far from drawing the audience into the stories - narrated by four capable actors - these attempts at figurative imaginings are too self-conscious and overt, and render the play disjointed and underwhelming on the whole.

St George's West, 5 - 29 Aug (not 10, 17, 24), 6.00pm (7.30pm), £12.00 - £17.00, fpp254. tw rating 2/5 [kc]

Hammerpuzzle's Measure For Measure

Hammerpuzzle Theatre Company / PBH's Free Fringe

Shakespeare is on MacDonald's menu today and it's just as you like it: juicy hamletburgers, Big Macbeths - "Do you want Merry Fries of Windsor with that?" - and frothy milkshakespears. 'Hammerpuzzle's Measure For Measure' may not be everyone's idea of a happy meal, but at 50 minutes long and completely free of charge, it is certainly one of the fastest and cheapest Shakespeare shows at this Festival. Modern costumes thrust this production

into the 21st century whilst live music provides an original, unobtrusive chorus to the action. However, so much attention is given to 'reinventing' Shakespeare that the acting - which should give the production its biggest flavours - is (excluding the Duke's and Lucio's performances) disappointingly one-dimensional. Decent theatrical fast-food, but not gourmet.

Princes Mall, 15 - 25 Aug, 1.00pm (1.50pm), free, fpp268. tw rating 3/5 [pc]

TW RATINGS

- 1/5 Bad
- 2/5 Mediocre
- 3/5 Good
- 4/5 Very Good
- 5/5 Brilliant



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Q&A: NATASHA GILMORE

Natasha Gilmore is the brains behind 'A Conversation With Carmel', a mixed genre piece featuring performances from an 83 year old and a baby boy. We were intrigued when we first heard about it, and then our reviewer only went and gave it a 5/5 review; clearly, a Q&A was the only way forward.

TW: What is the concept behind your show?

NG: The piece is concerned with the cycle of life; it's a celebration of the joy and resilience of people in their later years, set at a surprise 80th birthday party.

TW: Your show was inspired by your grandmother. How did that happen?

NG: Just prior to my Grandma's death we had some very candid conversations that made me appreciate how important and precious inter-generational

communication is. This became the inspiration for the piece.

TW: The show contains dance, theatre, music and film: how do you make all that fuse comfortably together?

NG: I was lucky enough to work with a brilliant Director, Candice Edmunds who co-directed the piece with me. We started with the concept for the film, to have 'conversations' with a number of different older men and women inspired by the conversations I had had with my own Gran, and then devise the piece inspired by the stories that they shared with us.

TW: The show features 83 year old Diana Payne-Myers. Is she still working or did you have to persuade her out of retirement?

NG: I saw her perform in January 2011 and was really impressed by her. I knew she'd be perfect for the role, I just wasn't sure she'd want to work with us because we are a Glasgow Based company and she lives in London, but as it turns out she has family in Glasgow and was delighted to come to Scotland.

TW: Your son also appears in the production. He must be very easy-

going! Does he disprove the "don't work with children or animals" rule...?

NG: He's a very easy going, sociable baby. He's such a pleasure to perform with, but there is the added pressure of making sure he's had just the right amount of sleep and food.

TW: Why have you brought the show to Edinburgh?

NG: We're lucky enough to be a part of the 'Made in Scotland' showcase for the best of Scottish Theatre. We're hoping this will be an opportunity to bring our work to new audiences as well as interest from new venues for future touring.

TW: Where will the show go from here? Is it the finished article or is it still developing? Will you tour with it?

NG: It's a finished piece that we are also touring throughout Scotland in the Autumn and hopefully it will have a life beyond this too.

TW: Presumably you have attended the festival before? Do you enjoy it?

NG: Yes I love it. This is the 4th time in 5 years with my own work. I took last year off - as I was concerned with a different sort of 'production'! (Otis was born in June.)

TW: Will you see other shows while you are in town?

NG: Yes definitely. I love watching contemporary theatre. I'm especially looking forward to seeing Protein Dance; I danced with them for many years so it's always brilliant to see their new work and catch up with old friends.

'A Conversation With Carmel' is on at St George's West, 19 - 28 Aug (not 24), 2.15pm (3.15pm), £8.00 - £12.00, fpp169.



Photo: Brian Hartley



Photo: Stuart Armit

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THE LARGEST PROGRAMME ON THE FRINGE

taking things political...

Another of Edinburgh's August festivals kicked off last weekend, though gets going properly this Thursday, the ThreeWeeks Editors' Award winning Festival Of Politics, which takes over the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood. We checked out their programme to give you a politically-themed final batch of 3 To See recommendations.

3 EVENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND WHATNOT:

Has Twitter changed the world? Social media and Scottish politics

There's a bit of a strand running through the Festival Of Politics about social media. This event focuses on whether Scottish politicians can use the likes of Twitter to communicate their messages, and considers whether it can be used to effect change.

The Scottish Parliament, 25 Aug, 1.30pm (2.30pm), free.

The Only Way Is... Twitter?

I think this is probably the headline-y social media event, as it's not free, and also features a couple of quite meeeaja guests: 'IT Crowd' writer Graham Linehan, who apparently uses Twitter to help in the creation of his TV scripts, and someone called Sean Rad, who apparently garnered more than one million followers for Charlie Sheen's Twitter account in the space of 24 hours.

The Scottish Parliament, 27 Aug, 4:30pm (5.30pm), Main Chamber, £6.00 (£3.50). Book in advance.

Making Human Rights real – the impact and influence of social media

This sounds just as interesting as Charlie Sheen and all that, however, dealing as it does with human rights issues. The way I see it, we are all humans, so should all be interested in the rights of said humans. I know I am. Anyway, the panel will discuss the part social media have played in bringing about change in the Middle East, and how important they will be in the future.

The Scottish Parliament, 27 Aug, 5.00pm (6.00pm), free.

3 BEST FROM THE REST:

Protest Songs? Who Cares?

A panel including Guardian music writer Dorian Lynskey and Live Aid man Midge Ure will discuss whether political song still has any relevance, and whether protest songs can make any difference these days. Ure also appears for a concert later in the day.

The Scottish Parliament, 25 Aug, 1.30pm (2.30pm), free.

Scotlands Of The Imagination: How We Create Our Own Future

Acclaimed Edinburgh born playwright David Grieg and novelist and journalist Allan Massie will discuss how the work of artists of all kinds – playwrights, novelists, painters, you name it – shape the vision that Scotland has of itself. Can they help bring about positive change?

The Scottish Parliament, 27 Aug, 2.30pm (3.30pm), free.

In Defence Of Politics: What is Comedy And Satire Doing To Our Politics?

This event will discuss whether political comedy and satire are a good thing, or whether they just undermine the government and cause disaffection. I imagine we all know what we think about that one; if you go along, you'll get to hear what comedy type Helen Lederer and Tim Telling of the Daily Mash have to say about it.

The Scottish Parliament, 27 Aug, 6.30pm (7.30pm), £6.00 (£3.50), book in advance

Find our more about this year's Festival Of Politics on their website at festivalofpolitics.org.uk



ART & EVENTS REVIEWS

International Exhibition of Photography

Edinburgh Photographic Society

Whilst lovers of hard-hitting photo-journalism or abstract art photography may leave this exhibition underwhelmed, those who admire high quality, composed images will be in sublime photographic heaven. Now in its 149th year, this prestigious exhibition celebrates print photography in its many diverse forms: still life, landscape, portraiture, photo-montage and nature photography are on offer. The exhibition feels a little sporadic with no central theme running through the works, which are occasionally overly posed and studied. Nevertheless, the technical skill displayed, in particular the admirable attention to light in the landscapes, as well as the subtle spontaneity and charm of several of the portraits, makes this a must for those interested in the work of the most skilled contemporary, global practitioners.

The Edinburgh Photographic Exhibition Centre, 7 Aug - 4 Sep, times vary, £3.00 - £4.00, fpp189, tw rating 4/5 [jb]

Left To My Own Devices

New Media Scotland

Inspace, with its futuristic technologies and all-knowing staff, is much like the Apple store. Not your typical gallery, the silence is broken by frenetic irregular melodies, the works are more like inventions, and interaction is actively encouraged. Whilst conventionally un-

artistic, the works displayed do rely on visual or audible immediacy for effect. Sachiko Kodama's abstract reaction of ferrofluids to magnetic fields is entrancing, whilst Toshio Owai's electronic musical grid marries sound with image, creating a reverberating DIY soundscape. The exhibition is eclectic, giving a disparate (but probably intentionally so) account of the ambiguously named 'device art'. If it leaves you perplexed, then the massage chairs (representing the history of privatisation, by the way) are good for killing 15 minutes.

Inspace, 4 Aug - 4 Sep (Wed - Sun), 12.00pm (8.00pm), free, tw rating 3/5 [jb]

Runaway, Success Stills

Unless you enjoy watching baffling art films, you'll walk out of British artist Stephen Sutcliffe's exhibition as quickly as you walked in. On display are ten video-collages made from archived film and television material, alongside two photographs, a

wall drawing and a poster. If you're gifted with selective hearing and can filter out the noise of one video from another, you'll notice they are disjointed and inconclusive. Alone, they are potentially interesting and effectively convey moods, but thrown into this hodgepodge, they have no relevance to each other apart from their meek response to 'the idea of high culture'. A shame, since Sutcliffe tackles a question so potent that, in this case, it falls flat on its face.

Stills, 4 Aug - 30 Oct, 11.00am - 7.00pm Mon - Thu (11.00am - 6.00pm Fri - Sun), free, tw rating 2/5 [jb]

Rebus - Secret Edinburgh

Rebustours

We start off cheerily at the city morgue in this entertaining and informative walking tour of Edinburgh, loosely based around locations used by Ian Rankin in the popular Rebus series. Colin, the affable and quite eccentric host, leads his group around the Royal Mile and Holyrood, dispensing historical facts and reading extracts from Ian Rankin. This tour would be a really good way for a visitor to get their bearings in Edinburgh both geographically and historically; it's pretty light on Rebus, but instead there is a strong emphasis on architecture and literature with a visit to Robert Ferguson's grave. On a nice day this is a great way to spend two hours whether or not you're a Rebus fan.

The Royal Oak, 5 - 29 Aug, 3pm (5pm), £9.00 - £10.00, fpp186, tw rating 4/5 [km]



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INTERVIEW

a fringe doll on the edge: it's amanda 'fucking' palmer

ThreeWeeks favourite Amanda Palmer is one of those artists who, although usually booked to play just one night at Edinburgh's Edge Festival each August, also fully throws herself in the rest of the Fringe madness. Ahead of that Edge gig, we caught up with Amanda to talk music, the life of a self-releasing artist, and all things Edinburgh Fringe.

TW: You're playing Edge Fest again this year, how do audiences during the Edinburgh Festival differ from elsewhere?

AP: There's a divine openness about the Fringe audience. The fuck-everything-and-make-art attitude seems to snowball over the course of the month, especially since people have been encountering art energy in the streets and everywhere else they go. It's such a fantastic thing, to get so many artists and audiences colliding at once. Playing my one rock show at the end of the month almost feels like cheating, as if every other fringe act has been performing foreplay on the city for the whole month and now I get to bring them to orgasm.

TW: What can people expect from that show?

AP: Bizarre surprises as usual! But I can reveal some of them: I'm playing with a brand new back-up band from the states, and they're just sublime. Our goal of the evening is to make everybody dance. We're using SYNTHESIZERS for some of my new material and have therefore decided to also cover some of our favourite eighties songs. We're borrowing a group of horn players in every city we play in, and here in Edinburgh it's the Horndogs - who rove through the venue and play to warm up the crowd. But best of all is one of our special guests: my cousin Hugh, from the Isle of Skye, is coming down. I won't tell you what he plays, you'll have to just come and be awestruck.

TW: You've already been performing at the Festival this year, alongside Jason Webley, as Siamese twins Evelyn Evelyn. How did that show come about?

AP: Ohh, it's a long long story. But we devised the concept while we were up late one night, as a pun, and never thought we'd actually see it through. Jason is obsessed with the number 11, and we're always seeing 11:11 on clocks, as many people are. So we joked late one night, while on a tour together, that a conjoined twin band of sisters named Evelyn Evelyn would be hilarious. And then, being completely

crazy people, we decided to make a fictional song for a little 7" record. While making that record we came up with so many other ideas that we decided to cut a whole album. Jason and I are practically best friends and one of the ways that you get to spend time with your friends, if you're a touring artist, is by creating something with them. Up to that point I'd only released "serious" music, I hadn't allowed myself the freedom to release something just for kicks. It was very liberating to do that, come to think of it. It marked a big step for me as an artist, to be able to just have some fucking fun.

TW: What form does the Evelyn Evelyn show take?

AP: The show has a wonderful MC character (for our Fringe shows the role was played by Thomas Truax) who runs the evening and dazzles the crowd with the Twins' many talents. A shadow puppet show reveals the tragic details of their early life in gruesome detail. The twins also play a total five instruments, so there's a lot of wonderfully awkward shuffling around!

TW: In addition to all of that, you've lined up some impromptu 'ninja gigs' while you're in Edinburgh. Where can people find out about those, and what can they expect from them?

AP: It's all Twitter, darling. We've already done one as we speak. It was just wonderful. There's a little theatre company called Belt Up from York, and Neil [Gaiman, husband] and I are huge fans of their work. They've created a little room - covered in warm red cloth and couches and antiques - in one of the C venues for their three shows, and when I saw it at the beginning of the month I just wanted to crawl under one of the couches and sleep forever. I dropped them an email and a week later, we were stuffing 60 people into the venue at around 1.00am after Neil and I announced on Twitter that we were going to play a secret show. Folks brought cake, the actors dragged some beer up and sold it from behind a desk, Neil read some poems and a brand new short story he'd written that day, I played some new and old songs, and we brought up a bunch of our acoustic-instrument playing friends as guests (The Jane Austen Argument, Andrew O'Neill and Edinburgh's own Edward And The Itch). People didn't leave until about 3:30... it was just sublime. We'll probably do some other similar things before the Festival is over, so do watch us on Twitter!

TW: You broke away from your former record label Roadrunner two years ago. How's life as an independent artist?

AP: Not very different from life as an artist on a major label. The Dresden Dolls were always very independent even when we were signed - I had my own way of doing things and never found the Label to be particularly supportive of my tactics. It's very difficult having to run your own business from the ground up, but I felt I was doing that anyway, and this way I actually get to keep the profit from the music I sell instead of handing it over to people that aren't really supportive - it's much more fulfilling.

TW: Are there any plans to perform again with The Dresden Dolls?

AP: Funny you should ask, yes indeed. We're planning a tour for this winter. Won't say where, but we're planning on hopping around and playing where we feel like it, when we feel like it. Another great advantage of not being on the label is that we can tour as much or as little as we'd like.

TW: Have you seen any performers in Edinburgh you particularly enjoyed? Are there any you're hoping to see before you leave?

AP: There's a laundry list of recommendations if you take a look at my latest blog (you'll find it at www.threeweeks.co.uk/amandapalmerfringeblog). My favorites so far have been 'Fascinating Aida', all three shows by the Belt Up guys (especially 'The Boy James'), Andrew O'Neill and Sophie Harrington-Walsh's show 'Damsel In Shining Armor'. I'm very excited to see Le Gateau Chocolat, I've heard he's incredible.

TW: What are your favourite and least favourite things about Edinburgh during the Festival?

AP: My favourite thing is simply the city's energy, and walking everywhere amongst art and theatre people. I love seeing the city transformed, and I love

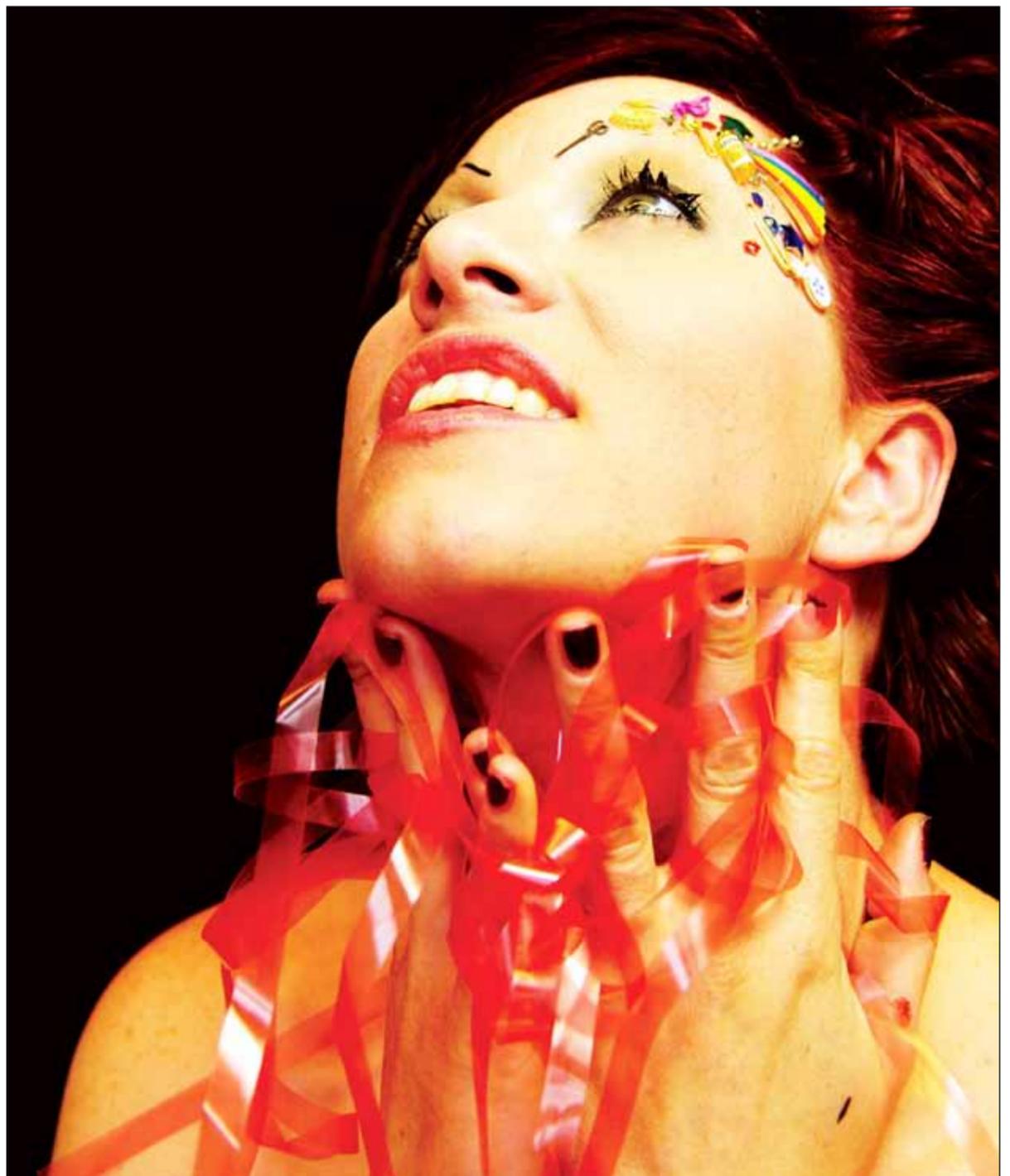
the togetherness-feeling. I love that all of the shops and cafés and bars invest in promoting people's shows. And mostly I love the element of surprise. I love coming across things I don't expect. As far as my least favourite things go, I hate feeling like I'm missing everything. I hate feeling the stress of knowing there's always something better happening and I'm not there. I hate drunk people flying me. I hate spraining my ankle on the cobblestones (though truth be told, I love the cobblestones themselves) and I hate the weather most of the time. Fair balance?

Amanda Fucking Palmer, The Edge Festival @ HMV Picture House, 25 Aug, 7.00pm (10.30pm), £14.00



READ MORE

ThreeWeeks.co.uk/amandapalmer



MUSIC REVIEWS

5/5 SHOW: All The King's Men: Putting It Together Again

All The King's Men

This all-male a capella group should have been one of the geekiest things on the Fringe – a group of young guys in matching purple shirts, singing, dancing, creating 'modern musical mash-ups' and idolising 'Glee'? Yet with their tight vocals, great dance moves, funny chat and mix of pop, rock, funk, rap, swelling ballads and even a Spice Girls medley, 'All The King's Men' proved me wrong. It isn't at all geeky; it's super-cool. By the end of the show, I couldn't stop myself from joining in their standing ovation, and they had surpassed N-Sync to become my favourite boy band of all time. All The King's Men, I love you! Sign my bra!

the Spaces @ Surgeons Hall, 15 - 27 Aug, 3.00pm (3.45pm), £5.00 - £8.00, fpp193. tw rating 5/5 [emw]

Dinner With Dean Martin

Philip Contini And His Be Happy Band

If you need to warm up a crowd, serve them a fine meal. While the diners enjoy light, fresh Italian food somewhat more elaborate than a big pizza pie, the Be Happy Band lays on background jazz, the applause increasing as the audience explores Vincaffe's epic wine list. Over coffee, front man Philip Contini joins the band, giving a spirited performance of Dino's best known songs. He doesn't quite have the range to match his idol, though, and spends too long chewing over the Rat Pack legend's biography, when he should be letting the songs speak for themselves. Still, with all the essentials served up and a merry, enthusiastic audience, the show's better than a kick in the head.

Vincaffè, 14, 21, 28 Aug, 7.00 pm (10.30pm), £32.00, fpp203. tw rating 3/5 [df]

Old Saint Paul's Festival Evensongs

Old Saint Pauls' Music

There aren't many sounds more spine tingling than that of a church choir, even during a quiet Sunday evening service. Performing a range of hymns, canticles and anthems, the choir filled the church with their mighty sound, from roaring bass to piercing soprano. Accompanied by readings from the book of Kings and the book of John, the choir recited every word with gravitas and created a spiritual atmosphere for those who had come for some quiet prayer. As far as church choirs go, they sound exactly as they should, pure and angelic, nothing more and nothing less. A good choice for a Sunday evening church service or if you're just really enthusiastic about church choirs in general.

Old Saint Paul's Church, 14, 21, 28 Aug, 6.30pm (7.45pm), free, fpp214. tw rating 3/5 [ng]

PassionFlower

Becc Sanderson

"We're here to soothe you", says Becc Sanderson with "just a guitar, a voice, and a trombone". Inspired by Billy Strayhorn's song 'Passion Flower', every tune they play has some type of flower in the title and most are about love. These three instruments create a surprising blend of sounds, and it was the perfect show to wind me down after a hectic week. Covering a range of musical genres, including Elvis Costello, The White Stripes,

and Radiohead the trio is surprisingly diverse. In my opinion, there are two ways to cover a song - to try and imitate it or create something new from the original. PassionFlower may have started with imitation but it truly is a unique piece of work.

New Town Theatre, 4 - 28 Aug (not 16), 10.00pm (11.00pm), £5.00 - £12.00, fpp215. tw rating 4/5 [tw]

Festival Folk @ The Oak

The Wee Folk Club

For 35 days throughout the festivals, Festival Folk offers a different act every night; if you are a fan of folk music make sure you make it down to one of their £5 shows to support this venue which is one of just a few havens for acoustic music in Edinburgh. In the intimate basement room, there is an undeniably family feel to proceedings with tonight's act—The Weekend Singers—welcoming an old friend of the venue to the stage to perform a few songs after the interval. But this by no means renders out-of-town visitors or newcomers to folk unwelcome. Rather, with more traditional songs and covers of Cat Stevens and Caledonia, there is something for everyone.

The Royal Oak, 1 Aug - 4 Sep, 8.30pm (11.00pm), £5.00, fpp204. tw rating 4/5 [kc]

The Sorries

Sorries

By now, many festival goers may have grown weary of traditional Scottish music, having heard it being blasted from every souvenir shop from Princes Street to the Royal Mile. But the Sorries are here to put the 'rad' into traditional (I know, sorry). From the tragic tale of injustice in 'MacPherson's Rant', through the soft love ballad 'Leezie Lindsay', to their cover of The Corries 'Johnny Lad' updated with humorous political lyrics, the pair had the audience fully immersed in their show, singing and clapping along to almost every song. The banter between the duo in between songs was priceless, not to mention their guitar solo battle during 'The Tree In The Wood' – not a dull moment was had.

Quaker Meeting House, 8 - 27 Aug (not 14, 21), 4.30pm (5.30pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp220. tw rating 4/5 [ng]

5/5 SHOW: The Oxford Gargoyles: Jazz A Cappella!

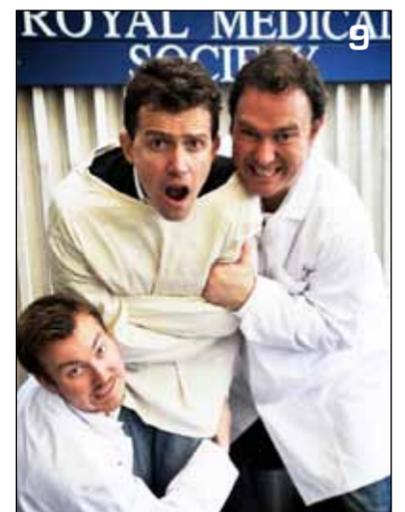
Oxford Gargoyles

Stylish, witty, charming and slick; I like my jazz the way I like my men, and this year The Oxford Gargoyles are my summer romance. Scatting, swinging and crooning their way through a carefully-constructed set, the group whip out an excellent range of classic and contemporary tunes to keep every audience member tapping their feet. Their movement is fun, inventive, and polished to a gleaming shine, whilst the uncontrived energy they produce is downright contagious. Moreover, the sensitive use of dynamics and beautiful original arrangements establish their genuine musical talent. The sopranos are occasionally a little pitchy at the top, but overall, their tone is wonderful and their rhythm impeccable - and as everyone knows, timing is everything in any relationship.

C, 14 - 29 Aug, 2.15pm (3.05pm), £5.50 - £11.50, fpp215. tw rating 5/5 [kl]



THE PHOTO PAGE



1. 'On The Bench' at C aquila [Stuart Armit]
 2. 'Jo And Brydie Play Doctor' at Gilded Balloon Teviot [Richard Dyson]
 3. 'Please Retain For Your Records' at Spottites [Richard Dyson]
 4. 'Teddy And Topsy - Isadora Duncan's Love Letters to Gordon Craig' at Hill Street Theatre [Richard Dyson]
 5. 'This Twisted Tale' at Leith on the Fringe @ Out Of The Blue Drill Hall [Kat Gollock]
 6. 'Last Orders' at the Traverse Theatre [Mark Conway]
 7. EIF show 'Princess Bari' [Paul Collins]
 8. 'Get Carter' at theSpaces @ Surgeons Hall [Richard Dyson]
 9. 'The Real MacGuffins: Skitsophrenic' at the Pleasance Courtyard [Kat Gollock]
- Guest Editor photographed by Richard Dyson

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Q&A: BAGPUSS

Bagpuss, dear Bagpuss, old fat furry catpuss... is here at the Edinburgh Fringe this year, no doubt delighting swathes of parents, oh, and their children too. This week's guest editor Camille O'Sullivan is a fan, and was determined to find out more about this seemingly eternally popular stripy, cloth cat.

CO'S: Meow. Delighted to see you here. Lots of people come to the Fringe looking for fame, or to get on TV, but you're already very famous and have been on TV for years. Why is the little pink cat coming to Edinburgh?

BP: This is the first time I've ever performed on stage, and Edinburgh is always the place for firsts...

CO'S: Congratulations on the rave reviews you have been receiving. What is your show about?

BP: It's about what is it like to go back, what will you find there, who you will meet and whether it will feel the same...

CO'S: I sadly do not get UK TV, so have only fallen in love with you

from afar over the years, but even learnt some Bagpuss songs. What is Bagpuss all about, have you changed over the years?

BP: Well there are lots of old familiar faces, my old friends from the TV show are here, and we are telling some of our favourite stories again. But now we're on stage and performing for new friends every day - that is very exciting.

CO'S: Who would you love to see at the festival?

BP: My old friend Ivor the Engine but I think he broke down somewhere near Newcastle.

CO'S: Do you have any favourite Edinburgh cat basket haunts?

BP: The penthouse suite at the Balmoral hotel has always suited me quite well...

CO'S: Who are your feline inspirations? Are there any famous cats you admire?

BP: I wish I could be like Bagheera in the Jungle Book, currently touring with Birmingham Stage Company...

CO'S: Who is your favourite puppet that you aspire to (if you were a puppet).

BP: Pinocchio. I'm a real cat really, but no one believes me...

CO'S: Do you read your reviews?

BP: Only the good ones

CO'S: What's on your rider?

BP: Fillet steak, champagne, caviar. I'm a very sophisticated cat

CO'S: How would you respond to a heckle?

BP: I would yawn.

CO'S: How do you get on with the human being actors in your show?

BP: Are there other actors? I didn't notice!

CO'S: Why pink?

BP: I was supposed to be orange. But when I was made the chemicals they used made me pink.

CO'S: Gabriel and Professor Yaffle - who'd win in a fight?

BP: You seem to have overlooked the fact that Madeleine is a pink belt in karate.

CO'S: What plans do you have after the Fringe - will you tour?

BP: Yes, I am going on tour. I will be at Birmingham Old Rep Theatre and Sutton Secombe Theatre in November and at Canterbury Gulbenkian Theatre in December. Hopefully I'll be back in London for Christmas too.

CO'S: Ask yourself a question you would have liked to have been asked!! (Sorry, new to this...)

BP: "What is your favourite show at the Fringe?" Bagpuss! 12 noon, Assembly George Square Theatre!

CO'S: Meow, thank you very much.

Bagpuss appears at Assembly George Square, 3 - 28 Aug. 12.00pm (12.55pm), £8.00 - £14.00, fpp19.

CHILDREN'S SHOWS REVIEWS



Red Riding Hood

About Turn Theatre Company

Precocious bookworm Ruby is spirited away to fairy tale land, becoming Red Riding Hood and meeting four fellow heroes. At first happy to escape her bossy mother, she realises the value of family and seeks a way home. The plot's typical but played well; the first three quarters are great, with strong characterisation, memorable songs and sharp, funny writing. It's backed by distinctive staging, at its best in the first appearances of the anthropomorphic Wolf - scary scenes for this sort of kids show. It's a shame that the ending, while not bad, couldn't keep up the success of the rest - the final ten minutes were rushed and underdeveloped. Though it's a small problem, it's less than this show deserves.

Gryphon Venues At The Point Hotel, 15 - 27 Aug (not 21), 12.00pm (12.45pm), £4.00 - £7.00, fpp28. tw rating 4/5 [klc]

Revolting Rhymes

Howes You Doing

What do you need for an excellent fairytale? Glass slippers? Big bad wolf? Just two men, a bit of imagination, and a versatile chair as it turns out - at least in this lively rendition of some of Roald Dahl's best-loved Rhymes. The absence of anything resembling a prop was used to great comic effect, and seeing the two actors manically multi-tasking as a handful of characters each sent children and adults alike into fits of giggles. Although the constant asides between themselves and the audience meant the Rhymes were steam-rolled over at times, this off-tangent banter was so funny, and so consistent with the spirit of Dahl's quirky tales, that it didn't matter in the slightest.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 - 29 Aug, 12.30pm (1.30pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp28. tw rating 4/5 [ka]

Sheep Ahoy! (On Grassier Tides)

Phil The Shepherd / Laughing Horse Free Festival

Storytelling Phil the Shepherd can't get his flock to sleep, so he tries a variety of tales, songs, animations and even a cartoon he draws live to try and help. He involves the audience and manages to raise a few laughs from parents too, but his stories are a bit silly, and the kids at the back of room lost attention pretty quickly, yelping and building a fortress out of their parents' chairs. The show is fun, his illustrations are cute, and he is an enthusiastic performer; if you're planning on going, get there early and make sure you get a seat at the front, otherwise your kids might get distracted and set fire to the stage.

Laughing Horse @ The Three Sisters, 4 - 29 Aug (not 10, 17), 14.45 pm (15.45 pm), free, fpp28. tw rating 3/5 [ld]

The King's Got Donkey's Ears!

Theatre of Widdershins

Suitably performed in the Storytelling Centre, this is a traditional children's show in the best possible way. King Orik is cursed with donkey's ears; to hide them, he lives in a tower and his confused citizens set out to cheer him up. Acted out by Andy Lawrence and a cast of puppets that were just on the right side of creepy, this was more an illustrated story than a play. It's a beautifully classic tale, based on a lesser-known story of King Midas, while paying satisfying homages to a variety of international folk tales, and with enough anachronistic humour to impress Disney-lovers. Like the best family-friendly entertainment, it managed to be charming, funny and imaginative.

Scottish Storytelling Centre, 8-28 August, 13.00pm (13.50pm) £6.50 - £8.50, fpp24. tw rating 5/5 [klc]

Bagpuss

Assembly, Soho Theatre and Birmingham Stage Company

The classic 70s children's TV show is brought to life on stage as we are welcomed into Emily's magical lost property shop where toys come to life to tell the story of - and mend - each item that she finds. The imaginative use of props and songs soon gets both young and old shouting along and laughing eagerly. The only criticism is that the venue is ill-suited to the piece - something more cosy would capture the children's attention more effectively. An attempt to solve this by bringing the toys and characters into the audience is brief and doesn't quite bridge the problem. However, I'd definitely recommend it for some nostalgic family fun - be there early and sit at the front!

Assembly George Square, 3 - 28 Aug (not 15), 12.00 (12.55), £8.00 - £14.00, fpp19. tw rating 4/5 [pr]

The Chronicles Of Bitter And Twisted

Galopin In Association With Fringe Management

Did the Ugly Duckling really live happily ever after? And what happened to the duckling that was raised as a swan? Both these questions are answered in this charming puppet show looking at friendship and fitting in. This novel take on the Ugly Duckling story is clever, with a script full of sharp one-liners for both children and adults. Strong central characters and great supporting roles (Team Coot are a blast) carry this delightful story along to a heart-warming, but not saccharine, conclusion. Like all the best children's entertainment, this show never preaches, nor does it take itself too seriously; as a result, 'The Chronicles Of Bitter And Twisted' offers delightful entertainment for both parents and children alike.

Assembly George Square, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15), 11.50am (12.50pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp20. tw rating 4/5 [ab]



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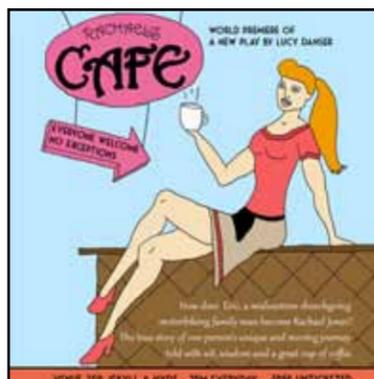
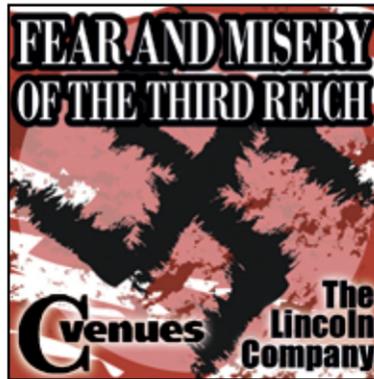
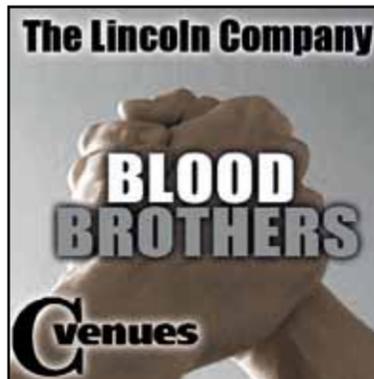
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TIM FITZHIGHAM
GAMBLER

"Gut bustingly funny" *Scotman*

7.30pm

COURTYARD PLEASANCE
0131 556 6550
www.edinburghfringe.co.uk

RANDY IS SOBER

"Razor-sharp and sublimely funny" *The Scotsman*

9.10pm

dairy room

TIFFANY STEVENSON
CAVEWOMAN

"Witty and inventive, full of well constructed jokes" *Sunday Telegraph*

2.25pm

THE STAND COMEDY CLUB
0131 556 2979 | thestand.co.uk

CARL DONNELLY 3
CARL DONNELLY!

"Gripping, unmissable stand-up" *The Guardian*

7.50pm

dairy room

GLENN WOOL
no lands man

"Glenn Wool is extraordinarily funny" *Time Out (Sydney)*

9.30pm

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GEORGE SQUARE
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0131 623 3030

comedy 4 club kids

"The perfect way to entertain the whole family" *Three Weeks*

5.30pm

BONGO

MICHAEL WINSLOW
THE MAN OF 10,000 VOICES
star of POLICE ACADEMY

8pm

underbelly

Jason John Whitehead
letters from mummy

"His deadpan drop-out wit is packed with laughs" *The Scotsman*

10.25pm

dairy room

Olivia Lee
CHATS THEM UP

"Lee could emerge as the best... the UK has to offer" *The Guardian*

5.45pm

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GEORGE SQUARE
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DANA ALEXANDER
NEW ARRIVAL

"Huge confidence, great delivery" *Now Magazine (Toronto)*

8pm

underbelly

PAPA CJ
ONE IN A BILLION

"Reliable crowd-killer" *Time Out*

10.20pm

underbelly

Sammy J & Randy
Ricketts Lane

"Raucous, witty fun from start to finish" *Chortle*

6pm

cowbarn

SAMMY J
Potentially

"An endlessly creative talent" *Time Out*

8.30pm

underbelly

PUPPETRY OF THE PENIC 3D

"Mind-Shockingly, Inhibition-Shatteringly Outrageous" *Toronto Star*

10.30pm

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PAUL McCAFFREY
SAYING SOMETHING STUPID

"He has charm, charisma and success written all over him" *Evening Standard*

6.20pm

underbelly

MATT KIRSHEN
WIDE-EYED

"Hugely impressive" *The Scotsman*

8.35pm

underbelly

TOM GREEN LIVE
star of ROAD TRIP and FREDDY GOT FINGERED

10.55pm

underbelly

KEITH FARNAN

"Brilliant, thought-provoking and laugh out loud funny" *Time Out*

6.20pm

underbelly

ANDREW MAXWELL
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9pm

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