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Edinburgh Festival 2016

PREVIEW EDITION | THREEWEEKSEINBURGH.COM



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COMEDY

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CLOWNING

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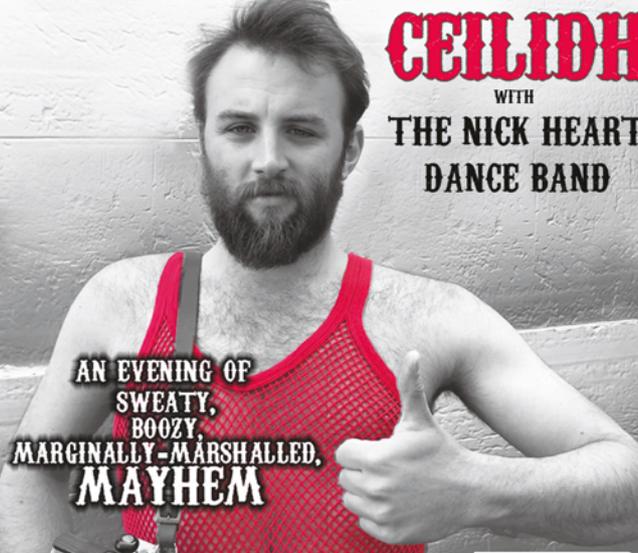
FIFTEEN ★★★★★ REVIEWS
ELEVEN ★★★★★ REVIEWS

SHOWS THIS GOOD DONT STAY SECRET FOR LONG FEST

assembly GEORGE SQUARE

BOX OFFICE 0131 623 3030 | 21:00 | 03 - 28 AUG

FLABBERGAST THEATRE
CELLIDH
WITH THE NICK HEART DANCE BAND



AN EVENING OF SWEATY, BOOZY, MARGINALLY-MARSHALLED, MAYHEM

assembly GEORGE SQUARE

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FLABBERGAST THEATRE
SKRIMSHANKS
A BEAUTIFUL DISGUSTING BOUFFON SHOW
of the Jackel



assembly GEORGE SQUARE

BOX OFFICE 0131 623 3030 | 22:30 | 03 - 28 AUG

Here we go again - another awe inspiring Edinburgh Festival

This is our 21st year covering the Edinburgh Festival, and we're more excited than ever about the three (and a bit) weeks of theatre, comedy, dance, opera, music, musicals, physical theatre, spoken word, circus shows, cabaret, visual art and all round marvellous events that are coming up this August in Edinburgh.

As you probably know, the Edinburgh Festival is actually a number of different festivals all taking place at the same time in the Scottish Capital. In amongst the madness you will find the International, Art, Book and Politics festivals, the Tattoo and the Mela, and - of course - the massive Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Every one of the 21 years that we have been covering this Festival, the programme always got bigger, and this year is no exception. Which can make it tricky working out quite how to navigate everything that is on offer. Which is where ThreeWeeks comes in. Did we mention we've been doing this for 21 years now? And we're here to help you pick out the new, the exciting and the alternative shows that are well worth checking out.

And it all starts here with this preview guide. Editor Caro Moses has worked her way through all of the festivals' programmes and a flood of press releases, chatted to those in the know, and revisited both the ThreeWeeks online archive and the separate archive in her mind, to select an assortment of shows that are definite contenders for your personal must-see list. As always, we present those tips to you here in the preview edition in helpful sets of three. There will be a new Three To See every day of the Festival too in our free TW Daily email - which you can sign up to at threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup.

Caro has also been busy chatting to some of our favourite performers ahead of the Festival, and you can read those interviews in this magazine. Both she and co-Editor Chris Cooke will be chatting to lots more Festival people over the coming month. To check all the interviews out, make sure you pick up each edition of the ThreeWeeks weekly magazine, which comes out each Wednesday of the Festival. And get online at threeweeksedinburgh.com, where you will also be able to tune in to Chris's podcast interviews. Talking of which, to celebrate our 21st festival, we'll be recording some podcasts live this year, all with former cover stars. Check out thisweektalks.com for full information and to book tickets.

And then, of course, there are the all important reviews. We have a great review team ready to go, checking out hundreds of shows and reporting back to you via the magazine, the website and our daily email. Once again, to make sure you don't miss a thing, get signed up for free at threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup.

Have a really great festival!

NEWS

04

INTERVIEWS

06-16



All our interviewees answer even more questions online PLUS new interviews go live everyday threeweeksedinburgh.com

PREVIEWS

17-23

VIEWS

24-26

TW EDINBURGH
ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com

Your guide to Edinburgh's Festival | since 1996

TW LONDON
ThisWeekLondon.com

Your guide to culture in London | all year round

Speedy updates from the Edinburgh Festival

Want to stay up to speed with all the goings on across the Edinburgh Festival? Look out for regular speedy updates from the ThreeWeeks news team in the TW Daily email. Sign up for free at threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup. Meanwhile, here's a batch to get you going...

- The Fringe Programme this year lists 3269 shows, which together involve performers from 48 countries and take place in 294 venues. Which is just silly numbers really, isn't it? And those were the stats as the print programme (pictured below) was published back in June. Some shows join the party after that date, plus some Fringe shows don't even bother listing in the Fringe Programme. Which is super Fringe, I guess.

- The Fringe Society, which administrates the Fringe Festival and publishes that aforementioned programme, has a



new boss. Shona McCarthy joined as CEO earlier this year replacing Kath Mainland, who's bloody well moved to Melbourne. McCarthy's prize for her new gig is me quoting what she said while launching this year's Fringe Programme.

- Launching this year's Fringe Programme, Fringe Society CEO Shona McCarthy said: "At its core the Fringe is an open access festival, which welcomes anyone with a story to tell, and for that reason, amateur and professional artists from around the world

continue year after year to come here to share their stories, hone their skills, create new opportunities for themselves and their work, and celebrate the joy of live performance". That was fun, wasn't it?

- The newish Artistic Director at the Edinburgh International Festival, Fergus Linehan, continues to evolve that side of Edinburgh's festival month. The contemporary music programme he launched last year probably remains the big innovation, with Godspeed You!

Black Emperor, Young Fathers, Sigur Ros and Mogwai amongst the musicians due to appear this year.

- Though another innovation at Linehan's EIF is it bidding for the most controversial production of the month prize, usually something a Fringe show would pitch for. Although Christophe Honoré's version of 'Cosi Fan Tutte' (pictured above) was billed as a "provocative and sexually explicit take on Mozart's opera" in the EIF's programme, since the production debuted in France ticket buyers have been warned of other potentially controversial elements of the show, with the offer of a refund if they'd rather not attend. Shunning a bit of controversy wouldn't be in the "spirit of the Fringe" though. Not that this is in the Fringe. Let's all talk about the spirit of Edinburgh from now on.

- Talking of controversies, the Chilcot Report into the 2003 invasion of Iraq caused a bit of a furore, didn't it? Despite having to compete in the news agenda with all that Brexit nonsense and the impending Age Of Trump. Not managed to read the whole 6000 page report yet, though? Never fear, Bob Slayer is organising a live reading of the whole thing, in a shed on South College Street. It'll probably take two weeks to complete. Ticket monies are going to a charity supporting refugees.

- Giving a shorter speech will be

Sam Wills, aka The Boy With Tape On His Face, who will be delivering this year's welcome address at Fringe Central, the space for Fringe performers. He'll give his speech on 5 Aug, presumably without any tape on his face. Though who knows?

- Did we mention that this is ThreeWeeks' 21st year covering the Edinburgh Festival? Can we include our own news in here? I'm never entirely sure why 21 years is still considered a landmark of note, but I don't write the rules. To celebrate, we are staging a series of live recordings of our TW:Talks podcast at theSpace @ Symposium Hall in the second week of the Fringe, all featuring former cover stars. Check out thisweektalks.com for info and tickets.

- Talking of theSpace @ Symposium Hall, ThreeWeeks co-Editor Chris Cooke will be staging his 'Free Speech' there again this year, in the third week of the Festival. Can we include that here too? Even though that's another plug and involves me writing about myself in the third person? It's a free speech about free speech! Check out chriscookesfreespeech.com for info and free tickets.

- That's enough news for now. But sign up to the TW Daily for regular updates on all that is happening across the Festival City. You do the signing upping at threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup

Photo from Edinburgh Fringe Society



JONATHAN HOLLOWAY
RE-IMAGINES
CHARLES DICKENS -
**A TALE OF TWO CITIES:
BLOOD FOR BLOOD**

Drama of the highest order
★★★★ Guardian
Red Shift are a terrific company
★★★★ Scotsman

CHUNG YING THEATRE COMPANY
中英劇團

33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD
3-28 Aug (not 10, 17, 24)
14:40 (90 mins)
Tickets: 0131 556 6550
bloodforblood.co.uk

Seabright Productions presents
rob crouch
directed by Hannah Eidinow
trolling
a new play by Rob Crouch
Seabright Productions presents

33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD
3-29 August 2.15pm (not 10, 17, 24)
Tickets 0131 556 6550 // www.trolling.uk

THE REMAINS OF TOM LEHRER
(PERFORMED BY ADAM KAY)

'INSPIRED UPDATES TO CLASSIC MATERIAL' ★★★★★ The Times
Gilded Balloon Teviot - 3-29 Aug not 10, 17, 24 3.45pm - Box Office 0131 622 6552

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Reduced Shakespeare Company
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4.40pm (80 minutes)
www.LongLostPlay.com

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Seabright productions

www.seabrights.com

★★★★ The Times
★★★★ Evening Standard
★★★★ British Theatre Guide

BORIS WORLD KING

fringe 2015
Pleasance Dome 5.40pm
3-29 August NOT 10, 17, 24
23 PLEASANCE DOME

'A masterpiece of comic timing.' Evening Standard

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My Life With Kenneth Williams**

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FRINGE FIRST AWARD WINNER

ONE SHOW ONLY!
16 August 3.50pm
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www.pleasance.co.uk

23 PLEASANCE DOME

★★★★★ TIME OUT
★★★★★ DAILY MAIL
★★★★★ METRO
★★★★★ THE TIMES

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Wild Thing**

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www.olivieredtheplay.co.uk

Gilded Balloon Teviot
3-29 Aug (not 10, 17, 24) 10pm
Box Office 0131 622 6552 - OllieReedThePlay.com

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20 MILLION YOUTUBE HITS

Adam Kay
**Fingering
on the Piano**
A minor

★★★★★
'GREAT, GUILTY FUN'
TELEGRAPH

Pleasance Courtyard
3-29 August (not 10, 17, 24)
Box Office 0131 556 6550
6.40pm
33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD

Ball-Zee: Gobsmacking the Fringe



Lots of a capella shows come to the Edinburgh Festival each year, and to be fair, most of them are pretty excellent. Yet 'Gobsmacked!' goes a step beyond, really, offering up a slick and theatrical show that tells a story as well as incorporating all sorts of vocal styling, from the traditional to the cutting edge.

One of the members of the seven-strong cast is internationally renowned beatboxing champion Ball-Zee and, because we are fans of a capella and big fans of beatboxing too, we spoke to him ahead of the latest Edinburgh run, to find out more about the upcoming show and his career to date.

CM: First of all, give us an idea of what to expect from the show. What format does it take?

BZ: 'Gobsmacked!' is the ultimate modern a cappella show. Expect amazing singers, a great looking young cast, song that'll make you want to get up and dance, and the beatboxing is not bad too! The show uses songs that most of the audience will know to tell a series of stories.

CM: Is everything you do a team effort or do you each have solo moments?

BZ: A cappella singing is inherently a team sport: you've got to be constantly listening and harmonising with your fellow cast members or else it'll sound bad. That being said, everyone gets their moment to shine, and you get a real sense of everyone's personality and what they bring to the group. The characters - and the cast themselves -

are very different, but together make a great team.

CM: How expansive is the show in terms of the genres it covers?

BZ: We do everything from David Guetta to Mumford & Sons to Prince to Queen. There's a bit of everything! It's a real challenge switching genres so often between songs, but it's great to be covering so many different styles.

CM: Tell us a bit about your fellow-performers in the show. How were you all brought together for this?

BZ: There are seven people in the cast and we're from all over the world. We have people from Boston, Brisbane, Sao Paulo, London, and of course the greatest city of all - Huddersfield! Yeah, that's my home town. Over seven hundred people auditioned to be in the show and we hadn't met each other

before we started performing together in 'Gobsmacked!' That being said, they already feel like my family. Doing a show as intense as this means you get to know people really well really quickly.

CM: What attracted you to the show in the first place?

BZ: Working with great musicians and creating something theatrical that was more than a concert or gig. It's great to expand the appeal of beatboxing past club gigs. Working in the theatre has also informed my approach to beatboxing - I definitely use that experience to better my own club or gig shows.

CM: Yes, as you say, you're the beatboxer, which is somewhat different than your standard a cappella singing. How do the different styles fit together?

BZ: One of the things I've had to work very hard at for the show is making sure I can beatbox in different styles so what I do complements rather than distracts from the music we're making. As in life, sometimes the loudest voice is the most dissonant, so for this show it's all about the whole rather than the individual. As I say, we all have our time to shine in the show, but for the rest of the time it's about blending, tuning, complementing your other performers...whether that's singing or beatboxing.

CM: When did you start beatboxing? Was it something you always wanted to do? How did you develop your own style?

BZ: I started when I was about fifteen when I saw some videos of the New York hip hop scene and heard beatboxing for the first time. That was just amazing to me and I knew I wanted to do something like that. It took me about eight or nine years to work my way up to being UK and international champion, and developing my own style was certainly a big help in that. Beatboxers all approach beatboxing from a different angle... some are very aggressive with their beats and rhythms, some try to be very musical, some try to have a huge variation of sounds. My approach is to make sure every single beat is as clean and crisp as it possibly can be so you have an strong consistency of sound.

CM: How long did it take you to get good at it? What advice would you give to someone wanting to learn how to do it?

BZ: I'm still learning myself! I watch videos of myself from last year and think that it's rubbish so I'm constantly trying to improve. If you want to start beatboxing there are loads and loads of YouTube videos out there from which you can learn. What I'd suggest is start by finding one or two beatboxers you really like and see if you can develop your sounds like theirs... eventually your own style will emerge.

CM: Where is your career going from here? Where do you see yourself headed? Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?

BZ: Well 'Gobsmacked!' is touring in 2016 and 2017 so I'll be doing that for a while. In terms of things outside 'Gobsmacked!', I'll be performing a lot with The Beatbox Collective and doing solo shows. I'd love to also develop my own Fringe show... maybe look out for me in 2017.

'Gobsmacked!' is on at Underbelly George Square, from 3-28 Aug.

Amée Smith is a proper actress: she trained at Rose Bruford College Of Theatre And Performance and you might have seen her performing in a number of shows at the Edinburgh Fringe, including 'Acts Of Redemption' and 'Knightmare Live'.

This summer, however, she is heading up to Edinburgh with her very own solo show in the comedy programme, which draws on her past experiences of being in a doomed relationship with a comedian... we caught up with Amée, to find out more about 'Relax, It's Not About You'.

CM: The show is listed in the comedy section, but it sounds as though you have an involved tale to tell us - would you describe this show as storytelling, or do you regard it as stand up?

AS: While I'm not claiming to have honed the skills of a stand-up since challenging myself to write a show, deciding to put it in the comedy section rather than the theatre section has definitely changed the direction the show was growing in. It has come from a theatrical place, but I've had to balance that with people's expectations of a comedy show. Or at least through the filter of my expectations of people's expectations of a comedy show. I think the format of the show will be familiar to a stand-up audience, no one will feel I've plunged them into 'Hamlet', but I hope that it also has the feeling of a complete story that you get from theatre.

CM: Tell us a bit about that story.

AS: I had my heart broken by a comedian and ultimately that's where the story of the show starts. I spent five years listening to him talk about

Amée Smith: It's All About Her

the show he was going to write and take to the Fringe and that experience seemed to sum up my frustrations with our relationship, that after years of working my life around his schedule, he didn't take a show to Fringe while we were together, and I'd had my life on hold for nothing. After chatting with friends I realised that all that energy didn't have to be wasted! All those talks about making a show could still count for something, it would just be mine rather than his. On top of that, I could set myself other challenges that would build me up again, things that would have me working towards being the me I wanted to be rather than have a focus on him or how he'd made me feel. Some of those challenges came from things he could do that I'd admired and missed when we broke up, but if he could do them, so could I. It's all about me and my feelings, my journey of getting past a stumbling block, but I think it's something we can all relate to.

CM: How much of your material here is based on the actual truth?

AS: All of it. There are places with names changed so I'm not over-sharing friends' personal info, but that's about it. If I can laugh at my life, hopefully others can too and in a positive way.

CM: Is it hard to perform a show that's so personal? Do you ever have difficulty sharing your experiences? Or is it actually cathartic?

AS: There's nothing in the show that hasn't already been shared with my friends and family, so although it's personal, it's not raw. That's made it easier to work with the material. The hardest thing has been the fear of doing this show in a sphere where so many people I know and admire excel, this is what they do every year if not every day, and I've had to fight the feeling of being a pretender. But if I'm challenging myself I might as well do it big, the bigger the risks the bigger they pay off. I'm expecting the end of Fringe to be the best Artaudian Theatre Of Cruelty style catharsis I could give myself.

CM: It sounds as though you had a pretty difficult time - do you think you've moved on from it now? Do you think it's had an effect on your personality, or an effect on where your future will go from here?

AS: I am over it. Totally over it. I went through a phase of saying those exact words to myself whenever a thought of him popped into my mind. I told myself that the more I said it, the closer I would get to it being true.



photo by
Jody Kingzett

Then I started working on this show and forgot about it for ages. The next time I said it, I found it was totally true. Getting past a tough time happens, and it happens while your focus is elsewhere. Not ignoring the hurt but not letting it be something that defines you. I think every experience you have, be it good or bad, changes you; changes your outlook or your approach to life. Sometimes that's small - you learn a lesson and move on - but sometimes it's life changing. The break up made me really cautious about new relationships, and I didn't want to let new people into my life so new people couldn't hurt me. That would make life safe, perhaps, but rather dull. Now I'm letting loads of new people in to share a bit of my life every day for 26 days! I don't know what effect that's going to have on my future but I'm excited to find out.

CM: Does He know about this show? What are the chances of him coming to see it?

AS: I don't know what he knows. I've not kept the show a secret - that would make ticket sales hard! - and we have mutual friends, so he probably does. He will be at Fringe this year, because he's finally doing a show, but I've checked and it clashes so I doubt he'll be at mine. Though if he were to be there, the show wouldn't change. It's not about him. And I don't mention him by name, he doesn't get any free publicity out of me!

CM: Do you think your show perhaps has the potential to help other people who are in a nightmare relationship (but possibly don't realise it yet...?)

AS: I hope that people leave the show feeling uplifted regardless of their situations. Nightmare relationships aren't the only things that bring us down, aren't the only situations where we let someone else's opinion of us become what we think of ourselves. A mean boss, a faltering friendship, even just a flippant comment from someone we never see again can weigh heavy. Reminding yourself that you get to be your own judge and have the control to change your fate is empowering and positive. I've not achieved a miracle, we can all do it.

CM: You're very well used to being at the Fringe - do you have any tips for first time visitors?

AS: A few months ago I and another alumnus were sitting in on a class at my old theatre school that is taught by one of our friends and, when we were asked about Fringe, the best piece of advice he had was "Don't do it". That's the best advice I've heard for performers. You either accept it and don't go, or see it as a challenge and prove them wrong by putting your all into it.

'Relax, It's Not About You' is on at Underbelly Med Quad from 3 - 29 Aug.

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Venue
43
Hill Square
EH8 9DW

/comedy

Sarah Hehir: Zeroing in on zero hours contracts

There are always shows at the Edinburgh Festival that draw on topical issues and social ills, and 'Zero Down' - whilst not taking a heavy-handed approach - does just that, exploring the uncertainty and difficulties faced by those on so called zero hour contracts. The play is a three hander focusing on three women working in a care home, and has been written by up and coming playwright Sarah Hehir. I spoke to Sarah to find out more about the piece.



CM: Can you start by giving us a rough idea of what 'Zero Down' is all about - what's the story you are telling?

SH: 'Zero Down' is the story of three women and the events that take place in one night in the basement of a run-down care home. It gets pretty dark in places but there is a warmth to their relationships and a relentless kind of energy - almost optimism - that carries the audience along. And carrying the audience along was one of my intentions when starting to write this play. I wanted to see whether I could create a character that we dislike. We might have sympathy for her situation but she says fairly despicable things. I then make her do something unforgivable, but with the aim of having the audience root for her - or at least feel less morally sure - by the end of the play.

CM: What specific themes are you exploring with this piece?

SH: It's about how people behave when under pressure; when life isn't going smoothly. It's easy to behave well when things are going your way, but if you're vulnerable emotionally and

financially, what might you become capable of? It's about people without power, options or agency and how precarious employment devalues work and the people who do it. It's also about judgement - the judgements we make as an audience and as soundbite consumers of news through social networking sites.

CM: What inspired you to write about these themes? The focus on 'precarious employment' leads us to the issues that surround 'zero hour' contracts. Is that something you feel strongly about?

SH: I work in prisons, schools and pupil referral units where I meet people who feel they don't have control over their lives. I'm interested in how this affects behaviour. It's very often young people, women with children and those without formal qualifications who end up relying on temporary and zero hours contracts. I've worked some strange and unpleasant jobs but I've always known I can get out if I have to. 'Zero Down' is about people who can't - people whose choices are extremely limited.

CM: Is there a message in the play? Does it seek to inform, to make a statement, as well as to entertain?

SH: I'd hate to think it makes a statement. I want the audience to be entertained, laugh, cringe, feel uncomfortable and be moved enough to leave thinking about the characters. If, through these characters and their struggles, there emerges some kind of message, I hope it would be something about the snap judgements we make. And the strange kind of society we live in right now.

CM: You did quite a bit of research into the impact zero hour contracts can have on people. What did you discover about how they affect people?

SH: Most often people spoke of hating the unknown: they couldn't plan ahead as they couldn't rely on a wage coming in. I spoke to people who felt that if they were critical of work practices - or even expressed an opinion - that they risked losing hours. In this precarious environment, they worried about potentially losing their home, having to take out loans from money lenders and

about bad health. Again, it came back to choices or a lack of them. Feeling powerless and entirely in someone else's control knocks confidence and self-esteem. Some people mentioned the lack of value that was put on them as workers if they could be so easily replaced.

CM: As the playwright, what is your relationship with the production in rehearsal and once it's up and running - do you step back or do you continue to make a contribution?

SH: I have been very lucky - or careful! - to work with people who are open to the writer being a part of the process. [Producer] Katie [Hurley] organised various readings during my early drafts so we have always been comfortable discussing language, themes and characters. And [director] Sophie [Boyce] encouraged me to be at early stage rehearsals where the cast ask questions, clarify ideas and language and make suggestions. Though I've also learned that stepping away from the rehearsal process to some extent will allow for the piece to become richer - I like seeing what comes of a different approach or interpretation.

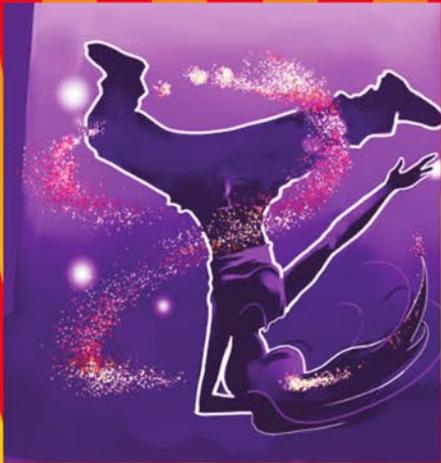
I didn't think I was precious about my scripts but now I wonder if I am! Originally, Katie wasn't sure about saying "ladders right up to my twat" and I surprised myself how fiercely I reacted: forceful in my insistence that it stayed. I craft the language carefully so I need to understand where a change is coming from before I just agree. I do often agree though and the script is better for it.

CM: You've achieved quite a degree of success with your work, winning awards and a place on the BBC TV Drama Writers' Programme. There are always loads of aspiring playwrights at the Fringe - what advice would you give them?

SH: Write lots. Keep writing new stuff. Write what keeps you awake at night and write honestly. Then come back and rewrite it. Then send it out into the world - open mic nights, ten minute festivals, open calls, submission windows. And be reasonably thick skinned or able to grow skin back pretty quickly.

'Zero Down' is on at Pleasance Courtyard from 3-29 Aug

CtheFestival



EDP
The Taming of the Shrew
14-20 Aug 11.00am C south



Atticist
Life According to Saki
3-29 Aug 2.15pm C



Cobbles & Rhyme Productions
[Title of Show]
4-29 Aug 9.20pm C cubed



Åsleik & Jon
Aladdin and His Magical Europe Refugee Tour 2016
3-29 Aug 5.30pm C nova



Modl Theatre
The Dandelion's Story
4-28 Aug 2.15pm C too



Steve Foster
Dylan and Donovan: The Prophet, the Poet and the Sorcerer's Apprentice
14-28 Aug 6.00pm C scala



Max Emmerson Productions and Elva Corrie
Adam & Eve and Steve
3-29 Aug 5.45pm C



EM-Lou Productions
5 Guys Chillin'
4-29 Aug 11.00pm C too



Gavin Lind
Committed to Mediocrity
3-29 Aug 7.30pm C nova



Under Two Floorboards
Is it Tabu?
4-29 Aug 7.45pm C south



ACJ Productions
Tomorrow, Maybe
3-29 Aug 3.15pm C nova



Some Riot Theatre
A Series of Unfortunate Breakups
3-29 Aug 7.30pm C nova

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Lucy Garland: Making a path through the forest



It's an important fact worth remembering that not all theatre is accessible to everyone, and that there are ways in which performances can be created for people whose needs go beyond the norm. 'The Forest', which is in Edinburgh for a short run this August, is the work of Frozen Light, a company which works with a very specific aim in mind - to stage theatre for those with severe learning disabilities. We spoke to Lucy Garland, who founded the company with Amber Onat Gregory.

CM: Your show is for a very specific type of audience. Tell us a little more about the project.
 LG: 'The Forest' is for an audience of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, or PMLD. And it is specifically designed for teenagers and adults with PMLD. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities have more than one disability, the most significant of which is a profound learning disability. They usually have great difficulty communicating, and may also have additional sensory or physical disabilities, complex health needs, or mental health difficulties.

CM: I think this is the first time a show like this has been on at the Edinburgh Fringe. What made you decide to create this kind of piece and then bring it to the Festival?

LG: Yes, as far as we are aware this is the first time that a show made specifically for audiences with PMLD has visited the Edinburgh Fringe. We wanted to bring 'The Forest' to the Festival because we wanted to address the issue that at the world's largest international arts festival there was no work that our audience could access.

For starters, the Edinburgh Fringe is notoriously bad for physical access. I think over the past few years venues have really started to address this, but there needs to be more than this for audiences with PMLD to be able to access the Fringe.

We knew if we were going to bring work for this audience to the Edinburgh Fringe then we would have to find the right partner venue. We did a lot of research into this and had many meetings, and in the end the Pleasance showed a real passion for our work.

They understood that due to the nature of our project and the needs of our audience we didn't fit into a traditional Edinburgh Fringe model and they have been flexible in order to ensure that they reach audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

CM: What happens in the show? Does it tell a story?

LG: It is really interesting that you should ask if there is any story. Sometimes theatre for people with PMLD doesn't incorporate a story as it is seen as unnecessary. There are questions about what someone with PMLD would gain from a story and some say it would therefore be better to just focus on the sensory experience.

This is a valid view and the theatre created under this model is incredible and the experience for the person with PMLD is wonderful. For us, though, story is really important. Life is built

up of stories and it is important for us that we work with story in our theatre. Both Amber and I love theatre that has a strong story-line running through it. We cannot know how much of our story our audience understands or doesn't, but verbal language - which we back up with visual communication methods - and the rhythm and cadences in it provide an audible landscape if nothing else. We also use a lot of repetition which is proven to be an important tool for people with PMLD. Repetition can help reiterate the story and stimulate memory.

So 'The Forest' does have a beautiful universal story of loss and love. It is the tale of Thea and Robin who both crave an escape from their everyday routines. One day they are drawn into a dark and mysterious forest and find themselves on a journey of self-discovery filled with surprising encounters and experiences that change their lives forever. Ivy, the caretaker of the forest, weaves a path with the hope that eventually Thea and Robin will find each other and the escape from their everyday routines that they so desperately seek.

CM: It's interesting to hear the differing opinions on what a show of this kind should be like. What other elements do you see as being important to make the experience truly work for your audience?

LG: People with PMLD access the world on a sensory level so this means that for theatre to be able to reach them it needs to be multi-sensory. It also needs to be performed at close proximity to the audience so they can explore each moment in detail. This therefore means that we have to perform to small audiences, six people with PMLD and their companions and families.

Traditional modes of theatre are incredibly difficult for our audience to access: the stage is often quite far away, no one interacts with them directly, and it isn't multi-sensory. Our audience may also find it difficult to sit still and be quiet and this automatically excludes them from mainstream theatre. It is great that in Edinburgh

over the last few years there has been a real growth in relaxed performance, but they still do not have the sensory elements our audience need to allow them to access theatre. Relaxed performances take away parts of the production to make it more friendly to audiences, specifically with autism. For our audience they may need some other things taken out - though strobe is the only thing I can really think of - but more importantly, what they really need is elements added to the performance. Creating theatre for audiences with PMLD is about creating a more enriching and encompassing theatrical experience rather than a stripped away version.

CM: How do you go about creating a show like this? Is it 'devised' rather than 'written'? What is your working process?

LG: As a company we create devised work. As artists this is our background and is the type of work we find most interesting to see and also create. Using devising techniques means that we can build our work around our sensory ideas. We always start with the needs of our audience. What do they need to be able to access our work? Usually we start with an environment. We like to choose environments that have scope for lots of sensory interaction. In 'The Forest' we wanted to create a dark abstract forest, this gave us lots of sensory ideas to play with.

CM: It's the first time for a show of this kind, but is this also your first time in Edinburgh?

LG: Yes, this is Frozen Light's first time bringing a show to Edinburgh and we are really excited about it. Though we came to the Edinburgh Fringe last year to research if there was scope for us to bring a show there. We had several meetings and this proved to be invaluable. I am so pleased we spent a year researching the possibilities to ensure we and our audience get the most out of our visit to the Fringe. We definitely plan on seeing other shows whilst up in Edinburgh and want to support other companies who create inclusive work, for example Hijinx with 'Meet Fred', and companies from the Eastern region where we are based.

CM: What's next? Do you have anything else in development?

LG: Yes, we are currently in development with our third show 'Home'. In fact, we are about to head into two weeks of technical and dress rehearsals. We are really excited about the new show as it is very different to the work we have done before. It is for adult audiences with PMLD and incorporates lots of new sensory moments alongside an original score and lots of one to one interactions.

'The Forest' is on at Pleasance Courtyard from 22-25 Aug.

Matt Winning: Space in the future

If you've seen Matt Winning performing one of his comedy shows, you'll know he's really rather good at it, which makes it all the more amazing that as well as all this performance lark, he's also a working social scientist who doesn't want to leave his day-job. His show this year is a set with a narrative that's in some way inspired by the work he does, and it sounds fascinating as well as funny. We put some questions to Matt ahead of his Edinburgh run.

CM: Can you start by telling us a bit about the new show? It's listed in comedy, but it's clearly got a proper narrative and sounds pretty theatrical - what's the story?

MW: I don't want to give too much away as I think it has some nice surprises in it, but it's about a future relative of mine who must journey through space to a distant star. It's all comedy, but I'd say half is stand-up and half is a play. I may make a cameo appearance as myself.

CM: What's the origin of the title 'Ragnarok'?

MW: It's the Norse mythology word for the end of the world. I'm a big fan of those vikings. And given that the show is about climate change and has other references to the end of humanity I was searching for one-word titles and instantly thought it was pretty apt. I think there's a Thor film coming out soon with the same title so lucky I got there first.

CM: Where did the idea for this show come from?



MW: I wanted to try a show that involved me interacting with a live robot on stage - we'd previously done something similar in the Bearpit Podcast and it was great fun. Also, I had an idea for an epic story which could also involve stand-up. The combination allows me to talk about things I want to discuss but find it difficult to do in a direct manner as a stand-up comedian because my on-stage persona is very silly and doesn't talk about his own life.

CM: When you are creating a show like this, how do you go about it, given that it seems to be something of a cross between theatre and stand up? Do you sit down and write it in a formal way?

MW: It's the first time I've ever done anything that isn't straight stand-up so it's taken me a lot longer than I hoped. Mostly because it's quite daunting and also because, unlike stand-up, you can't just go and test it out in clubs. So I've had to wait quite a while to start previewing the show. Yes there has been a lot of sitting down. Mostly it's been writing out the story and then going back to make it funnier. And then going back to change the story again. Ad infinitum

CM: There is real science in the show, isn't there? Because you are an actual scientist, aren't you? Presumably it's easy stuff that us lay-people can understand?

MW: Yes there is, and yes I am. I'm a social scientist, though, as my PhD is in climate economics. Any scientific references in the show are fairly simple bar one or two that are just for me really. To be honest, it's more a show about how difficult it is to write a show about climate change. I started with grand ambitions to be more science-based, but in the end

had to make it more of a personal journey as all stories tend to be. It's quite a good metaphor, really, for how difficult climate change is as a political problem. You have to engage people on a personal level and how it affects them, otherwise nobody cares.

CM: Climate change remains something of a hot topic, if you'll excuse the pun. Obviously, there remain some high profile sceptics. But is it something we should actually all be really concerned about?

MW: Some people are sceptical but almost all scientists agree that it is happening. The disagreement is really about how much we should do about it and what specifically we should be doing. But yes, we should be scared.

The aim is to reduce global emissions to a level which will give us a decent probability of staying below a two degree celsius global temperature increase. To avoid dangerous climate change we need to stabilise and then reduce atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gas and other non-GHGs rapidly over the coming decades. We probably have about fifteen years to start making dramatic reductions in emissions otherwise we'll end up with a global average temperature probably somewhere between three and four degrees celsius higher than pre-industrial levels.

We have no idea what that will involve. To give you an indication, we reached one degree above this year, so multiply the current climate issues by three or four and add in a bunch of non-linearities and feedback effects such as the ice-caps and sea-level rises. Basically, we have no idea what that future looks like.

Matt Winning performs 'Ragnarok' at Opium from 6-27 Aug

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Helen Duff: Just go with her

You may be aware of Helen Duff's previous work at the Festival, because she's garnered quite a lot of acclaim with past shows 'Smasher' and 'Vanity Bites Back', the latter achieving a Fringe First nomination. Her new set will no doubt be of the same high quality as previous outings, so I thought it was about time we had a good chat, even though the subject matter of the new show made me blush a bit - because I'm easily embarrassed, see. Good thing she isn't.

CM: You're an actress and a comedian, but how would you describe your show? What sort of genre or sub-genre does it fit into?

HD: Clowning with a capital K. I have a structure and a script, but I lurch off-piste, into many an audience member's lap, as soon as the opportunity arises. Or even if it doesn't. No rising required. Especially if there's lap-landing involved. Do many Laplanders read ThreeWeeks? I'm thinking my style might be right up their street! I would have said up their laps, but I'm sure they get really sick of lap-schtick.

CM: What happens in the show? What's the concept?

HD: I dress as a sperm in my quest to have my first ever orgasm. The audience try their best to help me. I thought post-Brexit it would be good to build up a real community vibe. It's about my quest for ultimate pleasure and all the pressures and pitfalls involved in trying to come like a train. Or Hillary Clinton. Or the latest fully empowered, 21st Century Lady Boss, who I might be beating myself up for not beating one out like that morning.

CM: What made you decide to attack this particular - and some might say rather personal - topic?

HD: When talking about something scares me, I try to find the tipping point between terror and terrific release, then play around that edge. So far it seems to be paying off. In a comedic sense that is. I still haven't had my massive "who let Martin Clunes in here?!" moment.

CM: The show's described as your "quest to achieve ultimate pleasure". Is it really about you or is it about everyone?

HD: It is all about me. It is 100% honest. Why would I make this stuff up? Weirdly, the honesty has made it all the more universal. Audiences can smell a political fembot faking up real life stories a mile off. I did an early scratch showing at Derby Theatre and right from the beginning, men and

women were sharing their experiences with me in the pub afterwards, totally unprompted. It's been a beautifully eye-opening show.

CM: Interesting - have other people's experiences informed the show?

HD: Yes. I posted an anonymous survey online asking seven questions all about sex. The answers were amazing, especially to the question 'what does it feel like to orgasm?'. The climax of the show recreates some of the best descriptions - but definitely not in the way you'd expect. There are eight mangoes and a unicorn ride involved for a start.

CM: Are you unflinching in your approach? Do you think the show has the potential to make your audience feel uncomfortable?

HD: There'd be a risk involved if I felt ashamed of what I was saying. It's uncomfortable if someone's apologising on stage, or asking for approval. I know that my material is funny first, absurd second - did I mention my mum made my vagina costume? She and my step dad have seen the show twice, and loved it - and totally truthful. If people come in feeling uncomfortable, I hope they leave feeling a lot more free.

CM: Do you ever feel uncomfortable delivering this material, or are you unembarrass-able?

HD: With clowning, that's all part of the fun. You don't have to cover up your failures or fears because they're an essential part of the act. It's liberating for everyone when a performer takes ownership of what might otherwise undermine their confidence on and off stage.

CM: This is the first time you've appeared at a 'paying' Fringe venue, isn't it? What made you decide to make the move from doing a free show?

HD: Playing at Pleasance is a dream



come true comedy-wise. I'm excited for my audience to come into 'Come With Me' feeling relatively safe and comedy savvy, and then find themselves being pleased at the Pleasance in a way they never expected.

CM: What keeps you coming back to the Edinburgh Fringe? What's your favourite thing about it? Is there anything you don't like about it?

HD: First, I'm a sucker for punishment. I'm seeing someone really lovely for a change and I cannot comprehend what's happening. So Edinburgh will put me back in my place. Second, Arthur's Seat before you wake up, Portobello before you go to sleep. And third, it's much harder to get free tasters more than once a day when the

fudge people recognise your face.

CM: You are now fairly Fringe-seasoned. What advice would you give to others who are taking a first step?

HD: Never flyer on the Royal Mile. People can't see you in the sea of faces covered with blood / ejaculate / carrot cake and it wastes valuable fudge tasting time.

CM: You're a trained actress, of course. Do you prefer your solo comedy shows to more straight acting?

HD: My solo stuff allows me a freedom to cross genres, talk to audiences, kick through taboos, tackle stuff personally and do all the best lines from 'Pretty Woman' while pretending to be Jabba The Hut in a jump suit. When you put your trust in comedy audiences, they're willing to go on wild, hour long, wonder chases with you.

CM: What are your ambitions for the show beyond the Fringe?

HD: Right now I'm really just focusing on trying to have my first orgasm during the four week run at Pleasance. Some people think it might sabotage the show. Honestly, if that is the trade off, I'm prepared for the show to take the hit.

CM: What other shows will you be seeing at the Festival? Do you have lots of tickets booked?

HD: Booked? Do you know how stressful just making an anatomically inaccurate ejaculate outfit has been? I'm looking forward to catching my clown mates Tessa Waters, John-Luke Roberts and The Establishment in action, plus straighter stand-up from David Quirk and Bridget Christie - who, actually, I just booked for while thinking of my answer for this question! You got me FOMO'd by my own interview, ThreeWeeks! It's like we're swimming in some kind of mad hypno FOMO Jacuzzi! And I've not even got my sperm outfit on!

Helen Duff performs 'Come With Me' at the Pleasance Courtyard from 3-29 Aug. Photo by Sophie Ansell

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Amelia Ryan: With love to Lady Liberty

Amelia Ryan first stormed the Fringe last year with her Edinburgh debut 'Storm In A D Cup', and the good news is that she is back for another bash at Festival success. She's known for having a slightly feminist edge, and admits to covering some material that might be described as 'issue-led', but ultimately - as you'll find out - her shows are light, entertaining and accessible to all who can cope with a little bit of naughtiness. I put some questions to Amelia to find out more about her new show, the themes it covers, and why she chose to call it 'Lady Liberty'.

CM: So, first up, tell us about this year's show. What type of performance can audiences expect?

AR: This year's show is FUN! It's a candid, comedic look at the quest for happiness / self-improvement / 'insert your personal ideal' here. For me, this is liberty. Liberty is freedom... a kind of nirvana where we let go of all the BS that wears us down. Using a combination of my own personal stories and sassy social observations, I look at the many ways we try to achieve it... from love to labiaplasty (hey, works for some), green-juicing to champagne-guzzling, monogamy

to manages a trois. It's a party: champagne is popped, games are played, costumes are worn (the Little Mermaid makes an appearance) and you can hear smashing songs from the likes of Cyndi Lauper, Whitney Houston and Pharrell Williams... however they've all got my own lyrical spin on them.

CM: Why is it called 'Lady Liberty'?

AR: The title 'Lady Liberty' actually came from a solo adventure I took to NYC. I'd just come out of a long-term relationship and was back home living my Mother (thrilling!), so I whisked myself away to clear my head (and

destroy my liver). On my final day there, I took a ferry trip down the Hudson River and saw the original Lady Liberty - the statue herself. She became my muse; a symbol of hope and empowerment. That sounds kinda naff, but it's true! The show traverses my quest to become said 'Lady Liberty', complete with a Seven Step Guide. Think Eat, Pray, Shove.

CM: What 'issues' do you address in the show? Are they serious ones? Presumably you make them hilarious anyway?

AR: I tackle issues like body-image, slut-shaming, obsessive health and wellness pursuits, binge-drinking (conversely) and marriage equality (which is STILL not a thing in Australia because we seem to be stuck in 1788. Are they serious? Well in the scheme of things, probably not. There's far more pressing issues in the world today, one need only trawl through the news to find them. When creating the show, I did think about 'going there' with deeper issues; women who truly need liberation - asylum seekers, abuse victims etc. But I made a decision that it's just not that kind of show. There is pathos, sure. But I made a conscious choice to keep it light and personally relatable. I'm all for shining a light on the truly pressing issues in society, but for me, this show wasn't the forum for it. There's enough in the world to depress us, I want people to leave my show feeling lighter and - the money word - liberated. And your presumption is quite right... it's all TOTALLY HILARIOUS. #modesty

CM: As an entertainer, you are regarded as having a distinctly feminist edge. Does that mean you are making entertainment for feminists or are you trying to convert the unconverted?

AR: I'd say it's entertainment for everyone - men, women and anyone who's on the fence - but with a feminine-empowered slant to it. I actually didn't intend to create feminist content, it just kind of happened. I'm pretty passionate about having a positive and inclusive world view, be it about racial equality, marriage equality, gender equality. But my material isn't a 'women against men' thing, it's about women not being against themselves... or each other! Yes, there are many socially and culturally constructed barriers against the femmes, but many of the barriers we create are self-imposed; the uber nasty ones that live in our heads. I aim to break those barriers down for the sake of personal and mental freedom. Being a woman, most of the things I discuss are relative, and relevant, to women. But there's plenty of juicy stuff in there for the fellas too.

CM: Do you think it's actually possible for a woman to "have it all"? What about men?

AR: I think women can "have it all". We just need to get really specific about what "having it all" actually means. Not to everyone else, not for societal expectations... but to ourselves. We need to let each woman define what it means for herself, without the incessant self-editing and fear of judgement. And that means not judging others in return. I do believe, however, that if wanting it all means having both copious amounts of time plus loads of cash, a killer career plus 3.5 perfect children, to have raging benders but get up at 6am for hot yoga... then you'll end up falling short somewhere. Something's gotta give, and it'll most likely be your sanity. Or dignity. Or both. But once you define what matters to YOU, you're set!

I believe men are a little better at compartmentalising, so I think they have a primitive advantage when it comes to defining what they want and going for it with conviction. Men operate in black and white, everything is (relatively) clear cut when it comes to goals and ambition. Where as women operate in the grey, we do want it all and generally at the same time. Plus women, in my experience, get plagued by self-doubt. Most men I know have seemingly infallible confidence. In addition, there's the child-birth thing which can - if women make a choice to go down that path - put a handbrake on career for a period of time. Of course, I'm making SWEEPING generalisations, and all of this is up for epic debate. Sliding scales etc.

CM: What's your favourite part of the new show? Is there a particular song or section you're especially proud of?

AR: I have two favourite parts. One is a parody of Robin Thicke/ Pharrell Williams 'Blurred Lines' that I've rewritten about society's ever present obsession with the 'thigh-gap'. It's a hoedown version that culminates in celebrating the female body in all its forms, and it's a tonne of fun to sing. My other favourite part is the nightly (and naughty) game of 'Never Have I Ever'. Three audience members are called to the stage to confess their scintillating sexual history over a glass (or more, for some) of champagne. It's a hoot, as it's different every night, and always elicits shrieks of laughter from the crowd. Surprisingly, people are always obliging to dish the dirt. I suppose the free bubbles help.

Amelia Ryan performs 'Lady Liberty' at Assembly George Square Theatre from 4-28 Aug.

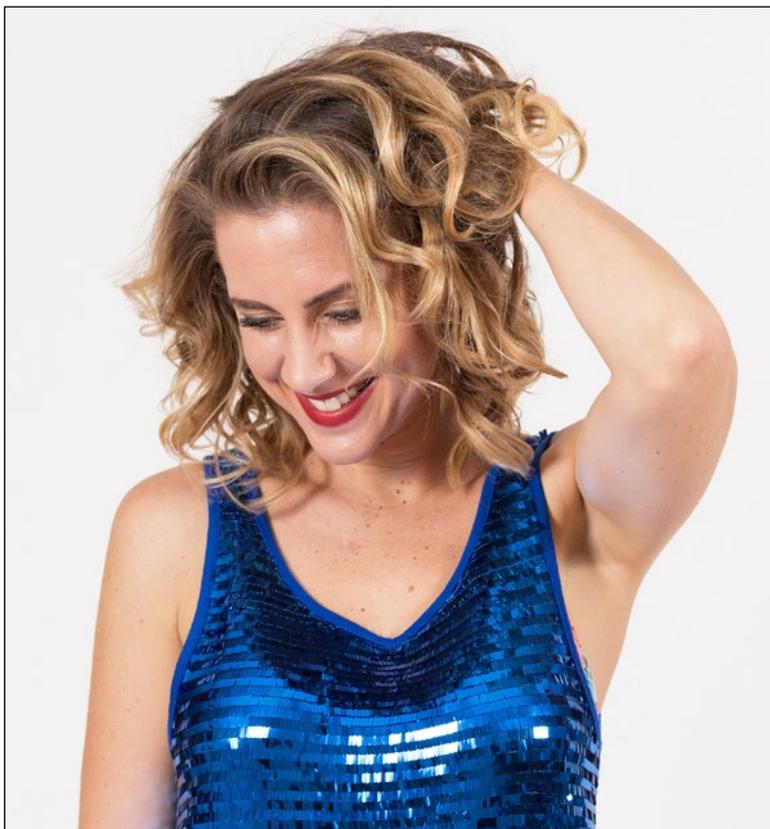
As soon as I heard about 'One Day Moko' I was intrigued by the sound of it. It's a one person interactive multimedia show, with the character of a homeless person centre stage. It's been quite a few years in development already in the hands of its talented creator, New Zealand-based performer and Edinburgh first timer Tim Carlsen, so it's probably reasonable to expect pretty good things. With that in mind, we orchestrated a quick chat.

CM: 'One Day Moko' is a one person show, isn't it? Can you tell us about the character you play? Do you play any other characters apart from Moko?

TC: Yes, 'One Day Moko' is a solo show that follows our protagonist Moko. He is a man who lives on the city streets. He's a contemporary sage, a storyteller, a thinker, a showman and a self described 'urban cowboy'. The city is Moko's turf. Moko plays some of the other characters he observes day-to-day, however it's always done from his perspective, we never experience a total transformation from one character to the other.

CM: What's the story of the show? Does it have a clear narrative or is this more of a character study piece?

TC: The story of the show is based on Moko's day-to-day observations, from his experiences at the drop-in centre, to the office worker who's glued to their phone. It's through these stories we're able to piece together how Moko connects to the world around him and ultimately discover his own story. I would say that the show is more of a 'character study piece' that offers an insight into his world. I've avoided trying to overtly explain Moko's background, why he's ended up on the streets and how he survives. I've left this for the audience to piece together through the way he observes and connects to his surroundings.



Tim Carlsen: Discovering and evolving Moko



CM: What are the aims of this show? Is there a political agenda?

TC: We want our audience to open their eyes when they leave the theatre. To realise that being human can often be hard, awkward, joyful, painful, pleasurable, confusing; the problem is I don't think we often get to tell ourselves that it's "okay" to go through these multitudes of emotions without feeling like we want to give up. The themes of the show revolve around living boldly, survival, loneliness and our desire to connect.

Homelessness is a world-wide problem, and I believe there is a 'Moko' in every city, someone who is often overlooked and ignored by society and those who govern it. When I started making this show, it wasn't my intention to make a 'political' piece of work. Though the fact that the show humanises a man who lives on the streets, when so often the homeless are viewed as the 'other,' makes this show relevant to current politics and the apathy that our leaders can have towards this social issue.

CM: What inspired the character and story of Moko?

TC: It all started back in 2008. My mum sent me a newspaper article that she thought I'd be interested in, and it was accompanied by a small note that read, "Hope you're having a lovely day. Here's something that made my heart swell".

It was a story about a homeless man, Moko, who would travel into Auckland in New Zealand everyday by pushbike and spend all day busking on his clarinet. He built a custom made bike carrier for his dog Mana to travel with him for company. He would do this every day, rain, hail or shine. The photo that accompanied the article had

him posing with his dog and clarinet - grinning from ear to ear. I was playing the trumpet at the time so the musical side of Moko really resonated with me.

I've always been curious about those who live on the fringes of society. The common question asked by so many is, "does someone choose to live this way?" I wanted to really put this question to the test and see how well informed and educated that 'choice' really is. Further questions started to unfold, specifically around homelessness "How does this community see the world around them? Do they have a daily routine? And more importantly, how do they survive?"

With a mind full of questions, a newspaper article buried into my brain and some very 'green' ideas of homelessness I started to develop 'One Day Moko' the following year as part of my final year of actor training at Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School in 2009.

CM: I know it's listed in theatre, but there are also songs and some audience participation. Can you tell us more about what type of performance we can expect?

TC: The entire performance is operated and stage managed by Moko, it's a solo show in it's purest form! The show also utilises six portable stereos that create music and various sounds to aid the story telling. The audience is involved throughout the show being the other essential 'character'. This relationship is built through improvised and scripted 'games', from audience members playing other characters that Moko meets, to holding props, to operating lights for him.

CM: What made you decide

to make this a one person show, rather than having other characters played by other actors?

TC: As I mentioned, I started to develop the concept of 'One Day Moko' during my final year of actor training at Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School back in 2009. This was part of a project where students had to create a 20 minute solo performance that would be presented to small public audiences. This project incentive kick-started the work into being a solo show from the beginning.

Making and performing this show solo has, at times, been a lonely experience which I think supports the show's themes. Towards the end of 2009 I did workshop the show to include three other actors but it seemed to detract from Moko's isolation.

CM: The show is described as a devised piece - how did you go about creating it? Do you work with a director?

TC: The show's development has been supported by a number of theatre practitioners since its first draft

performance in 2009 at drama school. The current director, Leo Gene Peters, was someone I'd met through drama school.

We discovered we had similar values around making work and what we like to see on stage. Leo Gene and I spent a lot of time brainstorming and conversing around our own personal experiences of relationships, what it is to be bold, fearful and volatile.

'One Day Moko' is on at Gilded Balloon Teviot from 3:29 Aug.

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Kid Carpet: Building castles on the Fringe

Kid Carpet hasn't been to the Fringe before, but we have been fans of his for years, having tracked his work as a musician and entertainer outside of this here Edinburgh bubble. So as soon as we heard he was headed to Summerhall this summer, we knew we had to set aside the time to see his show, a theatrical collaboration with fellow creative Vic Llewellyn. It's a really interesting-sounding project, so we also decided to set aside the time for a chat to get to the bottom of what 'The Castle Builder' is all about.

CM: So let's start at the start, what is the show all about?

KC: 'The Castle Builder' tells the story of a castle that Vic saw, on the clifftops outside Kristiansand in Norway, while he was on a boat trip. The performance then develops with stories of various outsider artists around the world who, for different reasons, have decided to make massive, monstrous and beautiful structures, usually - but not always - on land that they own, and generally without much previous building experience. The show is part documentary lecture, part theatrical drama and part rock gig.

CM: So it was that castle that inspired the piece?

KC: Yes, or more specifically, the

wonderfully strange truth and fiction of the stories Vic was told about that castle on the cliffs near Kristiansand. That was the initial starting point, a signpost, if you like, for what we might make a show about.

CM: Who is 'The Castle Builder'?

KC: Well, the castle in our story was either built by Haakor The Bad, a Viking warlord, or by an inmate at a local psychiatric institution. They were originally going to be our Castle Builders. But then we discovered Jim Bishop. Jim actually calls himself The Castle Builder and has built Bishop Castle in Colorado all by himself. Finding inspiration in him, our research led us to many more maverick personalities, incredible makers and

artists. In our show we refer to all of these people who decide to create the bizarre and unique as 'Castle Builders', as a kind of collective term for outsider artists who make large-scale work.

CM: So the show is basically celebrating all these Castle Builders?

KC: Yes. The show talks about the urge to create, finding inspiration and enlightenment through making something. It's about what drives people to dedicate their whole lives to making enormous monuments. The show is both joyful and quite moving in its portrayal of some of the artists we've discovered.

CM: How did the collaboration with Vic come about?

KC: Vic and I worked together on a children's show called 'The Lost Present' three or four years ago. We found ourselves discussing the possibility of making another a show together. Vic then told me that he was writing a book about this castle in Norway, and told me the vague story behind it. As I hadn't come up with any good ideas of my own, I managed to persuade Vic that we could make his castle story into a show.

CM: What do you each bring to the projects you have created together and how does your process work?

KC: We both have a fairly casual performance manner, but Vic's a far better actor than me and has written an amazing script, which jumps about

all over the place. I had some songs already written that were a great fit for the show, but also created some brand new music specifically for it.

We kicked ideas around together in short bursts over a long time and performed at about five work-in-progress events. About half way through the project's development stage we were booked to perform in Bristol at a scratch night, but we had no time to rehearse together. We decided that for this show we'd take it in turns, I'd perform a song and then Vic would do a talky bit, song, talky bit, song, talky bit and thus we'd be able to concentrate on presenting something that didn't seem too under-rehearsed.

The format worked surprisingly well that night and we've sort of stuck to it, with a bit of overlapping, performing and talking together as things progress.

CM: Is the music you have made for this typical of your output or is it a departure?

KC: This project has been a bit of a departure in that I'm writing songs based on other people's stories, which are drawn from an emotional response to those people and their work. I've been using a similar musical set up and writing style as I would for any other of my own songs - perhaps a little less digital - but there are some great songs in there that I'm proud of. I've found the whole thing really inspiring.

CM: You're known for your playful style of electronic music and use of unusual instruments - what set you on this path? Did you play 'normal' instruments to begin with?

KC: I've always played musical instruments at home and in school from a young age but never stuck at anything for long enough to get really good. I got into playing drums and then singing in bands and have been involved in loads of projects over the years. I started getting into sampling and sequencing, and found a sound when a love of cheesy keyboards and plastic sound toys developed into Kid Carpet gigs.

CM: You've just released your eighth album, haven't you?

KC: Yes, it's called 'Dogmeat'. It's more of an EP or mini album and features three songs from 'The Castle Builder' along with songs from 'Noisy Neighbours', one of my family shows. BBC6 Music have supported and played out 'Fire Breathing Dragon' about twelve times as well as 'Kids Make Some Noise' and 'Turn It Up' from 'Neighbours'. I was careful not to let

on that the songs were from theatre shows and tried to treat it as a regular music release, as I think the music press get confused with crossover art-forms.

CM: You've mentioned the children's shows you've done in the past. How do those shows compare to your gigs and other projects?

KC: I fell into making work for children and families by accident. Since our first child was born we've always shared childcare. After a year or so I was having the "where is your career going?" conversation with myself and discovered that I had about two hundred little ditty phone recordings made while looking after our son.

I thought maybe I should make an album for kids. Then I saw a call-out for theatre ideas, which offered support in developing those ideas into fully developed pieces. I applied with Kid Carpet & The Noisy Animals and eventually my first theatre show was made; it's now toured three times.

My theatre shows are very similar in approach to my live music gigs, just as casual in performance style with the addition of a bit of story and a designed set. It's amazing to collaborate with other people on those shows and to allow others to use their expertise to help me make something special.

The drive to continue making work for children has partly come from being outraged by the dross that is often served up as media for kids. The music, telly and theatre that I've witnessed has compelled me to make punk rock to help fight the twee and bright pink horrors from the shops.

CM: This is your first Fringe, right? What do you expect from it?

KC: That's right, I've never been to the Edinburgh Fringe before. At the moment I see it as an expensive gamble and a month away from my family while the kids are on their summer holidays. People tell us we're at one of the cool venues, Summerhall, and that there's often a vibrant scene around the place. With any luck it can be the springboard for successful touring over the next couple of years. We really believe in this show and want to perform it as much as we can both in the UK and internationally. Hopefully I'll get to see some great work by others and be inspired to make exciting new shows in the future.

'The Castle Builder' is on at Summerhall from 3-28 Aug



Three To See:

Recommended shows at this year's Edinburgh Festival

Navigate the massive Edinburgh Festival with the help of ThreeWeeks Editor Caro Moses who recommends top shows to see in handy batches of three

ARTS AND EVENTS

THREE BOOKY EVENTS

Leila Al-Shami and Robin Yassin-Kassab | Charlotte Square Gardens | 18 Aug

There are eight million (OK, slight exaggeration) brilliant events happening as part of this year's Edinburgh International Book Festival, and I can only recommend a few, which is sad. This was the first to catch my eye, though, as the above named pair - co-authors of 'Burning Country', a look at the Syrian opposition movement - take on the topic of 'How We're Failing Syria'. It's an issue that's been on my mind of late, and no doubt many other minds too.

The Write To Read - Discussing Dyslexia | Charlotte Square Gardens | 19 Aug

It's always worth remembering, as a lover of books, that some people's relationship with the written word can be a strained one, but that that is something that can be addressed. Appearing at this event about how to get younger readers reading is Vivian French, who overcame reading difficulties and became a successful writer, and who will discuss writing dyslexia-friendly books for young people. She's joined by one of my favourite children's authors, Cornelia Funke, and Barrington Stoke MD Mairi Kidd.

Malcolm Harvey



Aarathi Prasad | Charlotte Square Gardens | 26 Aug

Aarathi Prasad is the author of 'In The Bonesetter's Waiting Room - Travels Through Indian Medicine'. It's a unique survey of Indian medicine which takes in a wide range of subject matter -



from Bollywood plastic surgeons to neuroscience in Delhi to a mental health initiative in a Mumbai slum. This discussion should make for a fascinating event.

THREE POLITICAL EVENTS

Barton Swaim - The Political Speechwriter | Scottish Parliament | 19 Aug

Speech-writing's been in the news of late, what with that there Melania Trump being accused of plagiarising the words of Michelle Obama. But

it's a pretty interesting subject anytime, right? I mean, who are these speechwriters who put words into the mouths of other people? How do they master this art? Luckily for you, here's an event at the Festival Of Politics that will shed light on it all. Join Michael Russell MSP and former speechwriter Barton Swaim, author of a book on the subject.

Malcolm Harvey and Michael Keating | Charlotte Square Gardens | 23 Aug

This is a Book Festival event with a political theme that's surely on many minds at the moment, the renewed debate over the possibility of Scottish Independence, particularly since English and Welsh voters pushed the UK into Brexit, despite the European Referendum results in Scotland going the other way. Malcolm Harvey and Michael Keating, co-authors of 'Small Nations In A Big World', take a look at what lessons the country can learn from the experience of Nordic and Baltic states.

I Could Do That! - Art In The Public Space | Scottish Parliament | 20 Aug

There are loads of art exhibitions on in Edinburgh this month, of course, but they don't always attract huge audiences, no matter how much we plug them. Art that's out in the public space is another thing, however, viewed by anyone, and owned by

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everyone. This panel debate takes a look at what we should try to achieve with public art, and what makes a good space in which to place it, as discussed by two artists, an art teacher, and an art writer.

THREE ARTY THINGS

Art Late | various venues | 4, 11, 18 + 25 Aug

Edinburgh Art Festival offers a large range of events and exhibitions, but we can't recommend everything, so don't forget to have a look in their programme or on their website to view the full extent of what's on offer this year. But here's something to start you off. This specially programmed series of events comprising late openings, gallery tours, artist talks and performances through a number of venues sound fantastic, with each one a brilliant way to spend an evening at a very reasonable price.

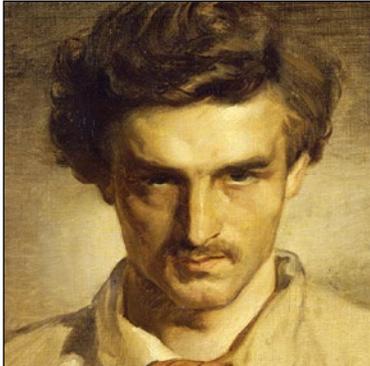
Zimbabwe Sculptures | Assembly George Square Theatre | 3-29 Aug

If you are a die-hard Fringe central type who spends their Festival days heading from Pleasance to Underbelly, over to Gilded Balloon and then back to Assembly, here's an exhibition you can take in on the way, because it's at the George Square Theatre, no need to head out to the (almost, alright, not at all) countryside of the (totally marvellous) Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art. As the title suggests,

these are some world-class stone sculptures, brought to you by the Vhukutiwa gallery of Zimbabwe.

Facing The World - Self Portraits From Rembrandt To Ai Weiwei | Scottish National Portrait Gallery | 16 Jul-16 Oct

If, on the other hand, you are a more wide-ranging sort of fringe-goer,



who takes in all the excellent venues outwith that central bubble, then this won't be out of the way. The Scottish National Portrait Gallery is worth a visit any time of the year, but this exhibition of self portraits looks extra special, featuring over 150 portraits from more than one hundred artists, whose work spans six centuries. Proof that selfies aren't just a modern phenomenon.

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Laura London
photo by James Millar

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CABARET

THREE WITH MARVELLOUS MAGIC

Laura London - Cheat | Voodoo Rooms | 6-28 Aug

From what I have been told, Laura London is pretty much the only female sleight of hand card magician working today, and that's interesting enough all by itself, but she's also performing a show with a fascinating subject. 'Cheat' tells the story of Geraldine Hartmann, a card cheat from the 1920s, exploring her love affair with poker and the cheating techniques she used to part the unwitting from their cash. It also helpfully informs you how you too can cheat at cards.

Dave Alwick - The Cult Of Dave | Voodoo Rooms | 6-28 Aug

When our ThreeWeeks reviewer saw this man's show back at Edinburgh Festival 2011, we gave him full marks, a five star review, or five-out-of-five as it's known around these parts, and our reviewer described at least one of his tricks as "jaw-dropping". I'm trusting on the general assumption that the last five years have been kind to Dave Alwick, and that his super-powers of trickery have therefore only increased. Oh, and the fact reviewers elsewhere continue to talk about what a brilliantly entertaining, unconventional and charismatic performer he is.

Die Magik Kunst | La Belle Angele | 6-28 Aug

Now, to be fair, this isn't really a real magic show, but a parody of a magic show, a comedy homage to that overly theatrical Vegas style of magic. In their heyday, Grainger And Hans were stars of The Strip, but haven't performed since their show closed in 1973. Now in their eighties, they are back for one last performance... which sounds like a recipe for lots of ageing make-up and physical comedy.

THREE TOP CABARET SHOWS

Peter And Bambi Heaven - The Magic Inside | Assembly George Square Gardens | 4-28 Aug

I'm reliably informed that this show is both funny and fabulous, which is no great surprise given the award-winning/nominated team behind it.



Asher Treleaven and Gypsy Wood play "Australia's most deluded dancing magicians". Go on, they had you at "deluded dancing magicians", didn't they? I'd book your tickets quickly to beat the rush.

Tomas Ford's Craptacular | Sweet Grassmarket | 4-28 Aug

One of TW's long term favourite cabaret types Tomas Ford returns with a show with a marvellous title, which will feature a set of the "worst songs ever". He's a veteran of cabaret, a Fringe regular, an award winner, and a provoker of five star write-ups from our reviewers. If you haven't seen him perform yet, then frankly, it's about time you did.

Roulston & Young - Songs For Lovers (And Other Idiots) | Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters | 4-28 Aug

If you want funny and clever songs from a talented and proven duo, then this pair are an entirely safe and superb. Michael Roulston and Sarah-Louise Young are both completely brilliant and have won lots of acclaim and awards. Apparently The Stage have described them as "A Flanders And Swann for the 21st Century", and I think I would probably agree with that. Don't miss this, or the other show they are responsible for, 'Cabaret Whore Presents... La Poule Plombe'.

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

THREE NON-FRINGE TREATS FOR CHILDREN

Raw | Edinburgh International Conference Centre | 27-28 Aug

The International Festival isn't normally the place I would be looking for a family show, but things have been changing around those parts, and this year they offer up this dynamic dance theatre show suitable for viewing by adults and older children. It's made by young people for young people and deals in themes young people can relate to, and comes to Edinburgh with Belgian dance company Kabinet K. Sounds like powerful and entertaining stuff.

Jo Cotterill | Charlotte Square Gardens | 14-15 Aug

For many years there's been an excellent programme of children's events at the very marvellous Edinburgh International Book Festival, and every year I find it hard to select a representative session from all the excellent choices available to me. So please do have a look at the whole programme. But for children - girls especially - in the 9-14 age bracket, Jo



Cotterill, appearing at two different events, is top of my list. This prize-winning author will discuss two of her most recent works, 'A Library Of Lemons' and 'Electrigril', both of which have won much critical acclaim.

Art Early | Fruitmarket Gallery | 13 Aug

This is an early-in-the-day version of the Edinburgh Art Festival's 'Art Late' programme, but it's for children and families instead of adults, and of course the content reflects that. I can't help thinking that this morning of themed gallery tours and activities will be a fab introduction to fine art for those little absorbing minds, and rather good fun for their parents too.

THREE FROM THE FRINGE FOR CHILDREN

Fairies And Dragons Of The Desolate Plain | Quaker Meeting House | 8-13 Aug

It's very probably the case that I recommend pretty much any show that Newbury Youth Theatre brings to Edinburgh, but it's because they must be one of the best theatrical youth

companies in the world ever, they come back year after year with really good quality plays that our reviewers write glowing words about. I don't understand why the whole world isn't talking about how great they are. But there you go. This is their latest, and I have every confidence in them.

Morgan And West's Utterly Spiffing Spectacular Magic Show For Kids (And Childish Grown Ups!) | Underbelly Med Quad | 3-29 Aug

Morgan And West are another outfit that I have utter faith in, and I already saw this show and can testify to its utter brilliance. It's a fabulous event for your older kids, but if you are a single adult, don't feel you can't go on your own. No-one will notice you are a single adult, they will all be too busy



staring at what's going on on-stage, because this time-travelling Victorian duo are always completely compelling. Do not miss, under any circumstances.

Braveheart | Spotlites | 2-28 Aug

I've picked one of Spotlites' shows for older children this time, and that's probably because my own child is getting older, but do take a look at the stuff they have on for younger children too, because they are all interactive and age-appropriate and yet totally not-intimidating - "theatre for kids who don't just want to sit still and watch". This one tackles a rather familiar and local theme, which is great.

COMEDY

THREE SCOTTISH COMEDIANS

Chris Forbes - Tall Needy Mutant | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 3-29 Aug

So, you're in Edinburgh for the Festival (sorry if you're reading this and you live here and the Fringe came to you



without even asking) so I absolutely demand that you go and see some actually Scottish comedians instead of just watching acts you've already seen down in London. Though to be fair, you might actually have seen these acts in London too. But never mind. First up, Chris Forbes of 'Scot Squad' fame with a show about wondering and worrying about what people think of you. Which sounds kind of serious, but I promise you, he is funny.

Scott Gibson - Life After Death | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 3-29 Aug

The next Scot is actually called Scott. Scott is from Glasgow and has been praised by Frankie Boyle, so that's a good start. His brand of comedy is

dark (read the title) but conversational and anecdotal and full of real life infused with hilarity. "Life After Death" is a story of fear, love, life and Blackpool", runs the blurb. Sounds promising, no? You can't go wrong with Blackpool.

Scott Agnew - I've Snapped My Banjo String, Let's Just Talk | Gilded Balloon at The Counting House | 3-29 Aug

The final Scot is also actually called Scott. What are the chances of that happening? Well, realistically quite high, I imagine, it's probably quite a popular name here in Scotland. But I digress. Scott Agnew, former Scottish Comedian Of The Year, is regarded as



a brilliant storyteller, and in this follow up to 2012's 'Tales Of The Sauna' he holds forth on the subject of working class gay life, sexual health, and mental health.

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THREE US COMEDY IMPORTS

Ever Mainard - Let Me Be Your Main Man | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 4-28 Aug

The great thing about going to see American comedians is that they've usually been honing their act for years over in the States, completely unknown to most of us over here, which means they are all really good by the time they make it to Edinburgh. I am expecting this to be the case for Ever Mainard, who brings her debut show to the Festival, and tackles gender identity, modern feminism, and mad stories from her youth growing up in Texas.

Liz Miele - Mind Over Melee | Underbelly Cowgate | 4-28 Aug

I have heard lots of things about this particular young comedian, and it's all good. She's exploring the darker side of her own life - struggles with



her physical health, mental illness in her family, dating, traveling through Europe alone and coming to grips with getting older and being an adult - joking about being an anxiety ridden American and trying to make sense of life.

Chris Gethard - Career Suicide | Pleasance Dome | 3-29 Aug

Depressing title, but cheerful subject matter. Oh, hang on, no, he's talking about suicide, depression and alcoholism. But it will be very funny, honest and raw, and let's face it, this guy has been in 'Broad City', 'The Office', 'Parks And Recreation' and his own cult hit 'The Chris Gethard Show', so with a CV like that, I feel pretty confident that he will deliver.

THREE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATORS

Phil Nichol - 20 | Assembly Checkpoint | 3-28 Aug

None of the next three really need me to sell them to you, because they are all Fringe doyens that you know and love. I just thought I'd draw some attention to the fact that they are all celebrating pretty significant milestones with this year's appearances. Edinburgh Comedy Award winner Phil Nichol has been performing here for twenty years (you might be able to tell that from his entry in the programme) and in this show pulls out some "greatest hits". Hurrah.



Brendon Burns
photo by Jody Kingzett

Brendon Burns - Dumb White Guy | Liquid Room Annexe | 6-28 Aug

On to another Edinburgh Comedy Award winner. Brendon Burns' show may not actually be all about his twenty-year anniversary - he's not even mentioning it in his blurb - but it is also his twentieth Fringe. They've both been there almost as long as ThreeWeeks have, which is why we allow them the title 'Fringe Legend'. This show is about being a "dumb white guy" apparently, but the subject barely matters, you know he will be good.

Simon Munnery - Standing Still | The Stand | 4-29 Aug

Of course, the previous two are just whippersnappers, really, when compared to the excellent Simon Munnery, who has been coming to the Edinburgh Fringe for thirty years. Yes, really. Thirty whole years of brilliance and innovation. And as well as this, his latest set, he's doing a one off special over at Spiegeltent later in the month, to celebrate his three decade stint.

THREE UNLIKELY TOPICS FOR COMEDY

John Hastings - Integrity | Pleasance Courtyard | 3-29 Aug

Just to be clear, it's not the integrity element that I'm claiming is an unlikely

topic for comedy. I mean, I am not saying for a moment that comedians don't have integrity. What's unlikely about this show is that John Hastings will be covering, amongst other things, the murder of his godmother, and yet, this is a comedy show. But I have every faith that he can be very, very funny, even against those odds.

Paul McMullan - Alcopop | Pleasance Courtyard | 3-28 Aug

This sounds like a pretty grim story. Paul McMullan talks about his alcoholism, how he lost his job and his wife, and how he ended up homeless with three young children. Yet, not really surprisingly, this accomplished raconteur tells his fascinating story of coming up after hitting rock bottom with hilarious candour. This is his debut hour, and he's not been doing stand-up for that long, but he's already



proving himself on the live circuit so I reckon he is one to watch.

Life And Death (But Mainly Death) | theSpace @Symposium Hall | 5-27 Aug

Actual NHS doctor Phil Hammond has been a bit of a fixture for years and years now in the world of comedy TV and radio, and it's not his first time in Edinburgh of course. He's back this year for a full festival run of a show about - obviously - life and death, in which he ruminates on the death of his forbears, and his own death, asking the question of whether it's possible not to kill yourself before your time, yet die gently when your time comes?

THREE SHOWS WITH FUNNY FACTS

Night At The Museum | Gilded Balloon At The Museum | 4-27 Aug

We like entertainment that serves a dual purpose, and love it when we get to learn something as well as having fun, and this, well, almost falls into that category: comedians come up with improvised sets prompted by genuine objects from the Museum Of Scotland archive. It's possible you'll learn nothing, but it will feel like you are learning something, plus, what's not to love about going to the museum at night? Super.

1 Woman, A Dwarf Planet And 2 Cox | Pleasance Courtyard | 3-29 Aug

Okay, so that first one might not have worked out too well genuine-facts-wise, but this one definitely will, I guarantee it. You will absolutely definitely learn something from this show (unless you are already a scientist who knows lots of things about space) from up and coming award-winning comedian Samantha Baines, who isn't just a comedian - she's been on the telly, in 'Call The Midwife, no less.

The Simpsons Taught Me Everything I Know | Voodoo Rooms | 6-28 Aug

Yes, this one is full of facts, and yes, they might be mainly about 'The Simpsons', but think how hot you will be on Simpsons questions next



time they come up in a pub quiz after you've been to this. Plus, you love 'The Simpsons', and you are going to love Yianni Agisilaou, the brilliant and delightful comedian who performs this show.

MUSIC

THREE GIGS OF A CONTEMPORARY KIND

Anohni - Hopelessness | Edinburgh Playhouse | 17 Aug

'Hopelessness', described as "a scream of fury against the evils of today's world", is the newest album from Anohni, formerly Antony Hegarty of award-winning Antony And The Johnsons Fame; the live version of it, which features film, dance, electronic music and Anohni's vocals, threatens to be visually stunning and emotionally provocative, and generally worth seeing if you can get a ticket.

NEHH - Awesome Tapes From Africa | Summerhall | 25 Aug

Yes, I will come clean, because you will find out anyway, we have chosen two contemporary music events from Summerhall's Nothing Ever Happens Here strand and it's because there is so much good stuff there was no way I was going to be able to choose just one. This is the first pick, a DJ set featuring diverse and different sounds from all over Africa, essentially the live version of Brian Shimkovitz's Awesome Tapes From Africa blog.

NEHH - Withered Hand and Chris T-T | Summerhall | 27 Aug

And so to the second of our NEHH choices, and this time it's Withered Hand, aka Scottish indie-folk-rock local Dan Willson. His story is quite an interesting one - he didn't begin to create music until he was thirty, when he did so in response to a crisis in his life, yet his first album was released to much acclaim - but, you know, that's just an aside. He's not just interesting. He is also good. As, by the way, is Chris T-T, so basically a double win here.

THREE CONCERTS A BIT MORE CLASSICAL OR TRADITIONAL

Tenenbrae | The Queen's Hall | 17 Aug

Renowned chamber choir Tenenbrae offer up a performance of pieces taking in work from a wide geographical spread and time frame, from Renaissance Spain and Italy, to Mexico, to 19th-century Germany. They are regarded as one of the world's greatest vocal groups, so if you can pick up a ticket, don't miss this chance to hear them in action.

Scottish Saxophone Ensemble | St Andrew's And St George's West | 21 Aug

I am completely in love with the saxophone, but it isn't a sound I would generally associate with the classical or traditional side of music; and yet, look at this, a quintet of players offering up "haunting psalms and whirling reels by contemporary Irish and Scottish composers". It's as though a beautiful dream that I didn't know I'd had has just come true, and it's courtesy of some highly talented international performers. Excellent.

Missing Pieces - Celebrating Women Of Note | Stockbridge Church and St Andrew's and St George's West | 14+16 Aug

I'm not the first to note what a shame it is that, historically speaking, too many great female artists have been overlooked. So often they achieved great things, and yet were ignored, or denied credit for their work. Which is why I am glad to see this musical event featuring compositions by the likes of Clara Schumann, Rebecca Clarke, Amy Beach and Lili Boulanger. Great composers who should be household names, like the men.

MUSICALS

THREE OPERAS

Norma | Festival Theatre | 5-9 Aug

This seasoned and award winning production has already been acclaimed throughout Europe since it was first performed at the Salzburg Whitsun Festival in 2013, so you know



you can expect something pretty special with this, opera fans. A great cast, headed by the renowned and sought-after Cecilia Bartoli, perform this powerful tale of love and betrayal.

The Snow Child | Paradise In Augustines | 22-26 Aug

This new chamber opera from young composer Owain Park is an adaptation of Angela Carter's (very) short story of the same name, so you know you can expect something pretty dark and tragic, but that's rather par for the course with opera, isn't it? The music for this has been praised for successfully evoking the sense of a frozen, barren landscape, so it looks as though Park might be one to watch.

A Medley Of Four Dreams Of Linchuan | New Town Theatre | 11-16 Aug

The listing for this warns that it is performed in mandarin with English subtitles, but how often can you

understand the language of opera anyway? It's based on scenes from 'Four Dreams Of Linchuan' by China's most celebrated playwright, Tang Xianzu, and is performed by the very well established Jiangxi Ganju Opera Troupe, who've been around since 1953.

THREE NEW MUSICALS

Confessions Of A Justified Song Writer | Assembly Checkpoint | 4-28 Aug

When it comes to musicals at the Fringe, we are always most interested in the newly developed or still developing ones, so here's the first of three you can experience in 2016. This first one sounds a bit meta, really,

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given that it's about the tricky process of creating songs, so that's interesting, plus, it's from The Royal Conservatoire Of Scotland, who always come up with great stuff.

Ghost Quartet | Roundabout @ Summerhall | 5-28 Aug

This already-acclaimed piece, first performed in 2013, sounds quite amazing, and puts me in mind of



something like 'Cloud Atlas', given its interweaving narratives set in various different times. It draws on all sorts of different musical genres - "murder ballads, doo-wop, Islamic adhan, and raucous campfire drinking songs collide", apparently, to make this something of a haunting, mash-up musical.

Macbeth | C | 3-20 Aug

Time to brush up your Shakespeare, not just because it's the 400th anniversary of his death this year, but because Hackney Empire are bringing

to the Fringe this rather intriguing sounding musical adaptation of the classic tragedy. Performed and created by young Hackney artists, the music falls into the categories of R'n'B, grime and afrobeat, so it's certainly not your average show tune fare.

PHYSICAL

THREE DANCE SHOWS

MIS - All Night Long | Dance Base | 17-28 Jan

This sounds to me like the sort of dance piece that people who "don't like dance" might be converted by, because it promises to be lusty and funny, offering up jackass stunts, physical comedy and multimedia elements. Plus, the cast are half naked and wearing not much more than socks and sandals in their publicity shots, which I'm counting as a good thing.

Smother | Zoo Southside | 5-27 Aug

This dance piece is returning to the Fringe after a very successful and acclaimed run in 2015, so you can count on it to be pretty good. It features an ensemble of seven directed by choreographer Andrea Walker, and theme-wise it's on the serious side - addiction, obsession and commitment in the study of a relationship between two young men - offering an interesting juxtaposition of



MIS - All night Long

Bad Shakespeare

GREENSIDe AT INFIRMARY STREET VENUE 236
MINT STUDIO
Bad Shakespeare (Theater OCU)
5th - 10th August
18:25 (1 hr)
BOX OFFICE 0131 618 0750
£8.00 (Full) £5.00 (Concession)
fringe

hip-hop and homosexuality, given the historically tense interaction between the two.

Linger | Dance Base | 5-21 Aug

This is choreographed by Breandán de Gallai, former principal dancer in 'Riverdance', who also appears as one of two dancers at opposing ends of their careers. Using photography, film, music, and movement, the show explores Irish gay masculinity and the question of what happens to dancers when they reach the conclusion of their careers. We feel pretty confident that this will be a moving and insightful piece.

THREE CIRCUS SHOWS

The Hogwallops | Underbelly's Circus Hub | 4-22 Aug

Hurrah for the circus, and for Underbelly's Circus Hub on the



Meadows, where, as you might expect, it's all about, well, the circus. Our first recommendation is for a show from Lost In Translation Circus that you might already have heard of, because it's back by popular demand after a previously highly acclaimed run. 'The Hogwallops' is a colourful, quirky and funny show inspired by Roald Dahl's 'The Twits', and it's a perfect show to go and see as a family.

Closer by Circa | Underbelly George Square | 3-29 Aug

Yaron Lifschitz's award-winning Australian ensemble Circa is renowned for its boundary-pushing shows which blur the lines between circus, movement, dance and theatre. This intimate show has been specially commissioned by Underbelly to bring audiences a close look at what physical feats the human body can achieve, and it sounds amazing.

Elixir | Underbelly's Circus Hub | 4-22 Aug

This late night fun-filled extravaganza has a strong narrative, despite being a circus show: three mad scientists are trying to find a cure for a zombie epidemic. It's an Aussie import, and you may not have heard of Head First Acrobats yet, but you surely will hear more of them in the future - this show has won acclaim elsewhere, and I expect a great critical response in Edinburgh too.

SPOKEN WORD

THREE HELPINGS OF STAND UP POETRY

Alexis Dubus Verses The Word | Voodoo Rooms | 6-28 Aug

We have been fans of Alexis Dubus for a long time now, ever since we first saw his history of swearing show (he's doing a one-off performance of that this year, if you want to see it) and gave him a ThreeWeeks Editors' Award for it. His "lyrical tales from the road" combine poetry, stand-up and storytelling, and we offer a pretty much 100% guarantee that you will enjoy them.

Dan Simpson - Artificial Ineloquence | Banshee Labyrinth | 6-28 Aug

BBC Fringe Slam finalist Dan Simpson presents a show that focuses on the rise of the robots, screens and machines that influence our modern lives - can humanity survive in a world of deep-learning artificial intelligence? Expect computer-generated jokes, emoji poetry and selfie stick stuff from this proven entertainer.

Get Three To See daily
threeweeksedinburgh.com



Stand Up And Slam | Just The Tonic At The Mash House | 4-28 Aug

If you like your spoken word funny and competitive, then this is definitely the show for you, and if you like it, you can go more than once because different stuff will happen each time. Six skilled acts from all around the UK go head to head to win your approval, and the result promises to be hilarious. It's a tried and tested formula that's already won loads of fans, so make sure this is on your list.

THEATRE

THREE MUSICIANS GONE THEATRICAL

Wind Resistance | Rehearsal Studio, The Lyceum Theatre | 5-29 Aug

There are a few musicians at this year's Festival who have broadened their performances to something that fits into the theatre programme, and we find that quite intriguing. In this International Festival presentation, award-winning Edinburgh singer songwriter Karine Polwart combines story and song to explore history, birdlore and personal memories, and it sounds absolutely lovely.

Horse Macdonald in Careful | Gilded Balloon At The Museum | 3-29 Aug

Meanwhile, another renowned Scottish singer songwriter - Horse, aka Sheena Mary Macdonald - heads Fringe-wards with her theatrical offering, a biographical and no doubt fascinating account of growing up gay in 1970s Lanarkshire, and her journey to becoming one of Scotland's most celebrated vocalists.

Mairi Campbell - Pulse | Summerhall | 3-28 Aug

And yes, it's yet another brilliant



Scottish singer and musician, Mairi Campbell, who also tells her own story in 'Pulse', a look at her journey through classical Guildhall training, to love and danger in Mexico, to discovering step-dancing in Cape Breton. Described as a "quest to heal cultural wounds" the show was first performed in 2015 to critical acclaim, and I imagine it's only got better since then.

THREE WITH PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Bricking It | Underbelly Cowgate | 4-28 Aug

A show in which an actual father and daughter actually swap jobs sounds interesting, doesn't it? Pat is a 73 year old builder, his daughter Joanna is a 29 year old writer and performer,



and for the sake of creating a piece of theatre, he's going to learn how to be a comedian and she's going to build the stage for his debut. It's not just a gimmick though, the intention is to examine just how much what you do affects who you are, and the result should be compelling and hilarious.

Sweet Child Of Mine | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 3-29 Aug

And if you thought that sounded appealing, this one might end up on your to-see list too. Australian Bron Batten performs live with her parents, as they discuss art, theatre and what exactly she does for a living. The ensuing show is funny, touching and honest, and has already won awards and provoked glowing reviews at home down under.

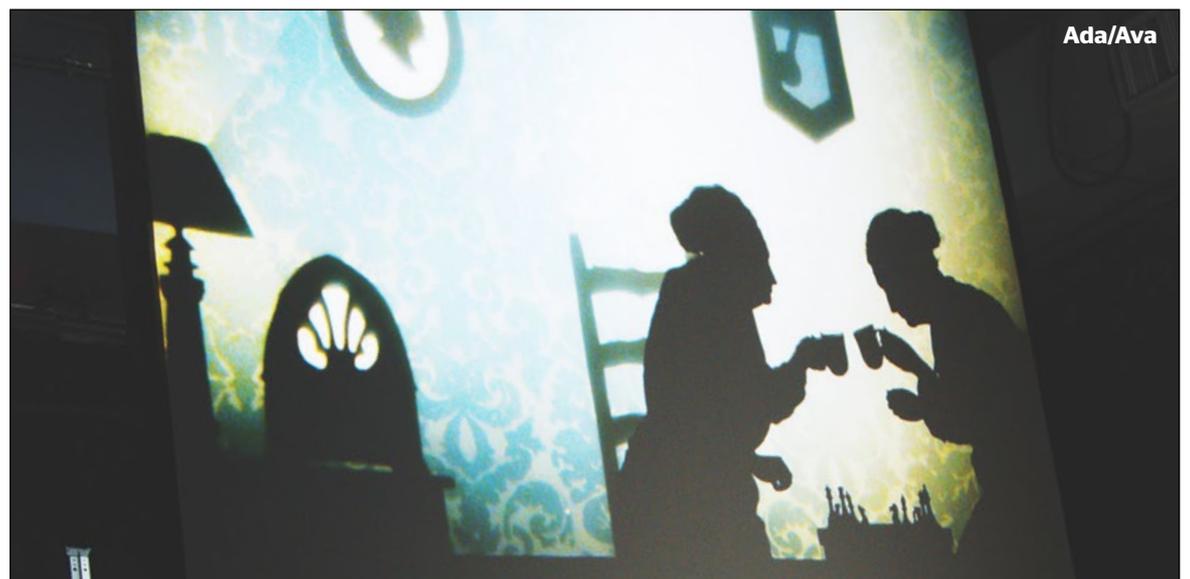
E15 | Northern Stage at Summerhall | 6-27 Aug

Okay, so this one doesn't quite fit with the theme, really, because it's about the action of a group of mothers, and doesn't really involve any children, but it's an excellent verbatim piece on how 29 single parents united against London's Newham Council to fight the gentrification of their home town and avoid being forced to relocate away from it. Important and timely.

THREE WITH TWINS

The Convolution Of Pip And Twig | SpaceTriplex | 5-27 Aug

Lots of people are fascinated by twins and the way that the relationship between a pair can be so close and even co-dependent. In 'The Convolution Of Pip And Twig', Kara McLane Burke and Siân Richards offer



a mesmerising performance as twins who do absolutely everything in the same way, suddenly disrupted by one sister's decision to take a different path. Sounds excellent.

Ada/Ava by Manual Cinema | Underbelly Potterow | 3-29 Aug

This has a similar theme to 'Pip And Twig', really, though the cause of the separation of this pair of twins is death, rather than choice. Acclaimed company Manual Cinema use shadow puppets, overhead projectors, actors and live music to tell the story of bereaved sister Ada, who continues a solitary life in a world she and her twin created for two. Expect something poignant, spooky and beautiful.

Twelfth Night or The Ship Of Fools | theSpace On The Mile | 5-13 Aug

Time now for some classic twin action with a twist. Accomplished Fringe regulars Livewire return with a vaguely unrecognisable sounding version of one of the bard's finest plays, to include a swingalong soundtrack and action aboard British Airways flight 1212. Sounds crazy, but it might just work.

THREE THAT ARE SOMETHING UNUSUAL

Scary Shit | Pleasance Courtyard | 3-29

This section is for those of you looking for something a little different, that perhaps blurs the boundaries between genres. 'Scary Shit' is certainly that, because although it's listed in the dance/physical theatre section, I think



this is a piece with a broader appeal than that might suggest. Rhiannon Faith brings real-life experiences to the stage in a show which sees two young women attending therapy in order to learn about themselves, and we think this will be amazing.

Knightmare Live | Pleasance Dome | 3-28 Aug

Bored of ordinary theatre? Yearning to see the cult TV classics of your youth adapted for the stage? Step right this way for 'Knightmare Live', which is back following a successful run in 2015, and this time they've made some changes - it will be bigger, better, and involve multiple contestants in this

comical, improvised adventure game homage.

A Good Clean Heart | Underbelly Cowgate | 4-28 Aug

This is on the list for two reasons: one, it just about falls into the category of 'unusual' by being a bilingual show performed in both Welsh and English (don't worry, it's accessible to those who only speak the latter). And two, it just sounds really blooming good. It's a funny, moving play from award-winning playwright Alun Saunders focusing on two brothers, raised separately in different families, and speaking different languages. Looking forward to it.



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Stephen Greer: Your guide to Glasgow at the Fringe

While Edinburgh might dominate a little during its Festival month, let's not forget what a great cultural hub Glasgow is all year round. And plenty of the talent that makes that so can be found here in Edinburgh during August. As for Fringe 2016, and the work that we can expect to make a big impression here that's made its way over from the more Westerly regions of Scotland, we thought we'd turn to someone a bit more immersed in that scene than we are. So over to Fringe veteran and lecturer in theatre practices at the University Of Glasgow, Stephen Greer.

While Edinburgh lays claim to the world's largest arts festival, Glasgow's all-year-round theatre and performance scene produces some of Scotland's most exciting and adventurous new work.

It helps, of course, that the city hosts The Tron and The Citz - hubs for new writing and contemporary stagings of classics respectively - as well as the CCA (aka Glasgow's Centre For Contemporary Art), Tramway and an ever-expanding experimental performance scene which includes the free festival //BUZZCUT// and the freshly-minted scratch night 'Only Skin'.

But August means the Fringe which means - like everyone else - Glasgow's off to Edinburgh in search of a stage and an audience. Here's a small slice of what you can expect from the theatre-makers who make a home in Scotland's largest city.

National Theatre Scotland's hotly-anticipated collaboration with US-based ensemble The TEAM, 'Anything That Gives Off Light', premieres at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, splicing myths from both nations with live music from the Scottish-American folk tradition. NTS's hugely successful musical 'Glasgow Girls' - based on the true story of seven feisty teenagers who



rally to defend their school friend and her asylum-seeking family from deportation - also returns to Edinburgh at the Assembly Rooms (perhaps taking on renewed significance in a country that voted to Remain in last month's referendum).

Glasgow theatre's ongoing affair with the possibilities of live music, spoken word and radical politics sees a pair of new shows from the creative team behind 2013's love letter to clubbing and the power of the crowd, 'Beats'. First, Julia Taudevin joins forces with Kim Moore, and Susan Bear and Julie Eisenstein from Glasgow's indie-pop duo Tuff, for guerilla-gig-theatre show 'Blow Off', tackling the psychology of

extremism. While on the south side, Kieran Hurley's new show 'Heads Up' at Summerhall features an original score from Michael John McCarthy (known for his work on Dundee Rep's revival of 7:84's 'The Cheviot, The Stag & The Black, Black Oil') in telling the story of a familiar city on the edge of destruction.

Hurley's show also appears as part of the Scottish Government sponsored Made In Scotland showcase which looks to offer an alternative to the biennial British Council Showcase in programming tour-ready work to catch the eye of promoters from around the UK and overseas. This year, the showcase also features Sam Rowe's queer, literary autobiographical work 'Denton And Me' alongside Gary Gardiner and Ian Johnston's collaboration with the late Adrian Howells, 'Dancer' - a show featuring the best (most generous, most touching) interpretation of Lady Gaga's 'Telephone' that you're going to see across the whole Festival.

Both works first saw light at The Arches, the sprawling club and performance space forced into closure in mid-2015 after a licensing dispute and the heavy-handed intervention of Police Scotland. It's no small measure of The Arches' legacy that so many artists associated with the space have become regular fixtures at venues and festivals around the world.

Other Arches associates present at this year's Fringe include Nic Green, whose show 'Cock And Bull' - created with Rosana Cade and Laura Bradshaw - sees three women turn Tory conference speeches into theatre in an act of political exorcism. You should also fight for a slot to experience Cade's deceptively simple yet striking 'Walking: Holding' - a one-to-one performance in which audience members are led by the hand on a carefully planned route within the city. Both shows appear as part of the Forest Fringe at Out Of The Blue Drill Hall, now in its tenth year. Across town, Ishbel McFarlane's 'O Is For Hoolet' (which started life as winner of The Arches Platform 18: New Directions Award) sings a passionate and moving history of Scots and minority language culture at the Storytelling Centre.

Finally - and flying the flag for Glasgow's sharply socialist generosity - stalwart of the Glasgow and Scottish comedy scene Janey Godley returns for her thirteenth year at the Fringe with a pay-what-you-want show at the Free Sisters on the principle that no-one should be too poor to see comedy. No money will go to promoters as Godley posted on social media, "if you can afford it, put money in the bucket; if you can't afford it, take money out".

Jinx Yeo:

Jinx Yeo is very much an Edinburgh newcomer, and is headed over to Scotland all the way from Singapore, the first person from that specific area of the world, I'm assured, to stage a comedy show at the Edinburgh Festival. To celebrate his inaugural Fringe experience, we thought we'd let him tell us a bit about his favourite Asian comedians, so that you will know, now and in the future, exactly which Asian acts to keep your eyes peeled for when traversing the comedy festivals of the world...

I'm a big comedy fan, so it's hard to whittle down my list of favourite comedians to just a handful. But here are five of my favourite Asian comedians...

1. Paul Ogata

When I was asked to write this list, Paul Ogata was the first name that immediately sprang to mind.

I first watched Paul perform in Singapore about a month after I started doing comedy. It was a mind-blowing experience - I didn't know it was possible for a comedian to kill so hard. I remember thinking, "this is the standard of comedy that I shall aspire to"... and that hasn't changed.

Not only does Paul have a seemingly endless bag of hilarious and clever material, he's also razor-sharp when it comes to thinking on his feet. He's one of the rare comedians who can improvise an entire comedy set just



Ishbel McFarlane in 'O Is For Hoolet'
Photo by AliceBoreas Photography

Top five Asian comedians

Photo by WilzWorkz



based on audience interaction. Even though he's based in America, Paul regularly tours in Asia three or four times a year because audiences just can't get enough of him. If you've ever watched him perform, you'll probably understand why.

Website: paulogata.com

2. Ron Josol

A master of fat-free comedy. Punchy routines without a wasted word, while still maintaining a natural conversational flow. He seamlessly integrates accents and impersonations, with observations and hilarious (often true) stories. If you get the chance, ask him about that time he fought Royce Gracie (former UFC champion).

3. Shazia Mirza

The one on my list probably most

familiar to Fringe-goers. A comedian who keeps you on your toes, Shazia's act is akin to watching someone do backflips on the tight rope between funny and taboo. She takes on sensitive topics that even "edgy" comedians often tiptoe around (such as Islamic extremism), and confronts these issues head-on like a boss. Unapologetically controversial, just the way I like it.

Website: shazia-mirza.com

4. Ronny Chieng

Many people have said that an aggressive cynical stage persona couldn't work for a Chinese comedian, but Ronny Chieng proved them all wrong. His angry-yet-funny rants have led some people to describe him as an 'Asian Bill Burr', though I don't think that does justice to Ronny's unique comedic points-of-view. His bit on helping his Mum fix her computer

problems is one of the most brilliant jokes ever written.

Website: ronnychieng.com

5. Imran Yusuf

Indian comedians often play on Indian stereotypes, and Muslim comedians often play on Muslim stereotypes. There's nothing wrong with that - but as an Indian-Muslim comedian, Imran

Yusuf doesn't do either. And that's what makes him so refreshingly unique. Instead of going for the easy laughs, his intelligent humour mixes introspective personal revelations with insightful social commentary.

He's also a prince of a guy - generous to a fault when it comes to offering help and guidance. It's much due to Imran's encouragement that I'm making my debut at the Edinburgh Fringe. Being

based in Asia, I don't have a fanbase in the UK, so I was apprehensive about traveling halfway across the world to do the Fringe. But Imran told me: "The worst thing that can happen at the Fringe, is that the experience will make you a better comic". So here I am.

Website: imranyusuf.com

Jinx Yeo performs 'A+ Underachiever' at Laughing Horse @ Southside from 4-28 Aug

/comedy

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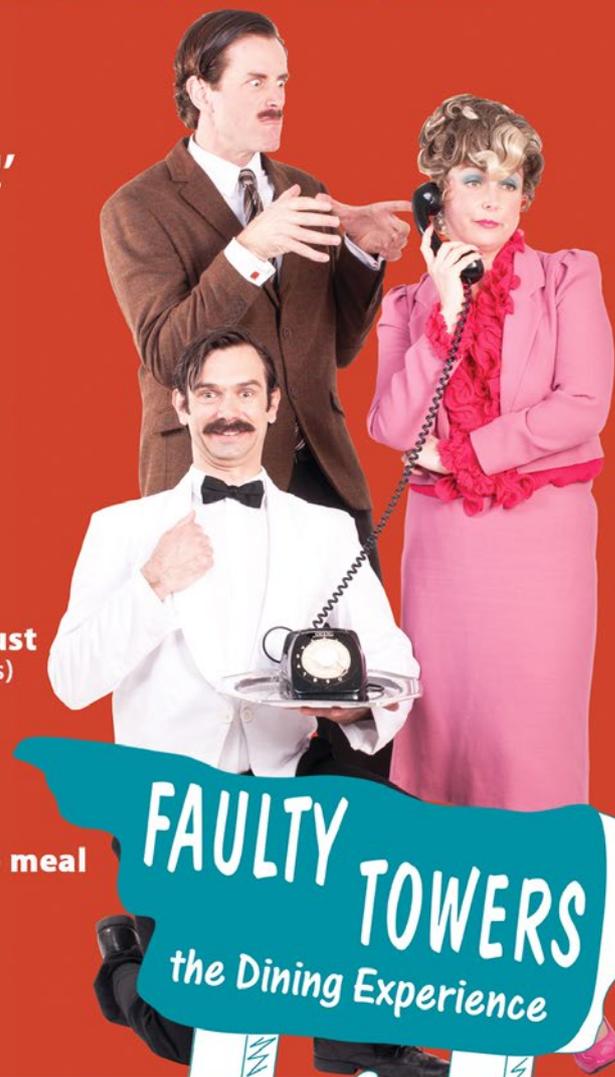
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Penny Ashton: A tale of two nuptials



If you were around at last year's Fringe, you might have noticed the triumphant return to the Fringe of Ms Penny Ashton, following an absence of an interminably long decade. She took the Festival by storm with her Jane Austen inspired one person musical 'Promise And Promiscuity', garnering plaudits galore and winning lots of new fans, who will be glad to hear that she is bringing the show back for another run.

In the intervening time, though, she began a new adventure, when she got married back home in New Zealand... which had us wondering how that would compare to marriage, Austen style.

In March 2016 all my Jane Austen dreams came true when I married my own personal Mr Darcy.

I say that not because he had a universally acknowledged good fortune, but because I thought he was stuck up when we met. He thought

I looked a miserable bitch too so First Impressions (as 'Pride And Prejudice' was initially called) can be misleadingly vexatious. Or bollocks.

As I prepare for another season of my solo Jane Austen musical 'Promise And Promiscuity' at Assembly, thoughts

therefore lead to how an Austenian nuptial and an Ashton one differ, ever so slightly.

The Proposal

In Austen times a woman's lot was to simper coquettishly in the corner, pinching her cheeks and hoping her dance card would be filled in. Once she had danced with a man more than three times and he'd seen a flash of ankle, the only decent thing to do was get hitched.

In Ashton times I asked Matt out, pinched his arse and declared him my boyfriend after he filled me in roughly three times. Five years later on a bridge in Paris he caved in to my many hints - such as "So when are we bloody getting married?" - and proposed with the gaudiest \$2 shop ring you have ever seen. It looked like it had a herpes rash, and it was perfect.

The Planning

In Austen times a woman had been planning her wedding since she was a small child (unless she was a servant, then she was too busy scrubbing skid marks out of bloomers and contemplating ever increasing inequality and looming pox to care). Austenian ladies would no doubt have had a Hope Chest filled with crocheted

kerchiefs, and possibly contemplated how nice it might be to vote and not be considered their husband's chattels.

In Ashton times I did everything. Every. Thing. I spent a day deciding how to display table numbers then read 'The Bell Jar' and 'How To Be A Woman' to douche the bridezilla away. I got a fucking Pinterest account and kept the courier man busy delivering petticoats from China, flower-girl hair garlands from the US and a sense of perspective from nowhere. Oh but I did have a magnificent hope chest, and quite frankly a stunning glory box.

The Dress

In Austen times lighter shade dresses were common to indicate purity and a hymen intacta. They were floor length to prevent Uncle Stuffypants from fainting at the sight of an ankle, but pleasingly the bosom was often presented high.

In Ashton times I wore as many colours as I could to represent my hymen obliterated. And my bosoms weren't as high as they used to be.

The Ceremony

In Austen times a priest would intone on God's plan for a fecund life of squirting out babies half of whom

might die, and doing what your husband tells you.

In Ashton times we walked down the aisle to 'Especially for You', all mention of imaginary sky friends was banned, and I ruminated on a barren future of disposable income and sneezing without pissing myself.

The Wedding Night

In Austen times this was when a man showed his wife all he had learned at public school and from touring the continent.

In Ashton times it was distinctly more Bronte in flavour. I had two hours sleep, as I actually had the flu through my whole wedding and was throwing up and crying all night. I tell you this to warn all future brides; stock up on vitamins and sleeping pills before you get hitched. But most importantly, pick a man who will hug you and fetch you ginger ale and tell you how much he loves you as he hears your insides become outsides through the toilet door.

Love you Mr Harvey.

Penny performs 'Promise And Promiscuity' at Assembly George Square Theatre from 4-29 Aug.

All about ThreeWeeks

LONGEST ESTABLISHED: ThreeWeeks is the longest established specialist magazine at the Edinburgh Festival, the world's biggest cultural event, and has been discovering and championing new and exciting comedy, cabaret, dance, musical, theatre and spoken word talent every summer since 1996.

HALF A MILLION READERS: Each August half a million festival-goers rely on the ThreeWeeks free weekly magazine, daily email update, website and podcast for a comprehensive guide to all of the festivals that take place in Edinburgh during August, including the International, Book, Art and Politics festivals and the awe inspiring Edinburgh Fringe.

ALL OVER EDINBURGH: The ThreeWeeks Weekly Magazine is available to pick up for free at sites all over Edinburgh during August, with pick-up points in bars, cafes and box offices at all the key festival venues. Meanwhile the preview edition, published in late July, is also delivered direct to homes all over central Edinburgh.

TWO DECADES OF EXPERIENCE: The ThreeWeeks editors have been covering the Edinburgh Festival for twenty years, and provide their expertise and continued passion for the world's greatest

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VIBRANT REVIEW TEAM: This experience is complemented each year by a vibrant young review team who take in hundreds of shows first hand, sharing their opinions in ThreeWeeks, and helping us spot and champion the best new talent.

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THE THREEWEEKS DAILY EMAIL: The TW Daily lands in the inbox of thousands and thousands of Fringe fans every day, in the run up to and during the Festival. It provides all the latest news, interviews, columns and reviews in one place. Sign up for free at threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup

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THE TW:TALKS PODCAST: ThreeWeeks has been podcasting from the Fringe for over a decade. The all new TW:Talks podcast will see Co-Editor Chris Cooke regularly interview some of our favourite performers, in Edinburgh during the summer, and in London all year round. Tune in at thisweektalks.com.

THISWEEK LONDON: Just like ThreeWeeks Edinburgh discovers and champions great shows, performers and new talent at the Edinburgh Festival, ThisWeek London does the same all year round, with a set of Three To See recommendations every day of the year plus the Caro Meets interviews with some of our favourite performers, producers and directors.

ThisWeek London also benefits from the two decades ThreeWeeks has been covering the Edinburgh Festival, tipping Fringe favourites old and new (and brand new) as they appear in London.

Check all this out online or sign up for the free TW Weekly email at thisweeklondon.com.

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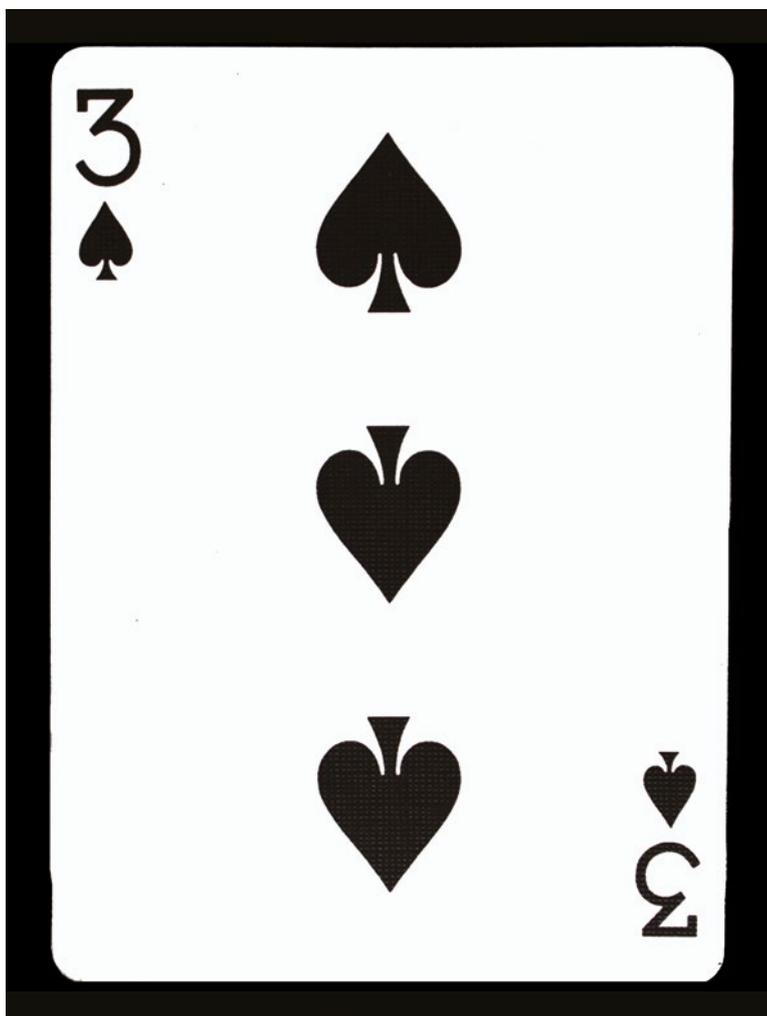
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