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## Speedy updates from the Edinburgh Festival

**Time for some speedy news updates from across the Festival...**

### CHILCOT REPORT READ

So, the marathon reading of the government's 'Chilcot Report' - in the shed next to Bob Slayer's BlundaBus - reached its conclusion at 2.45pm on Saturday, after 284 hours and 45 minutes of report reading. Said Slayer in The Guardian: "[The report] wasn't expected to be read. The establishment didn't expect anyone to read it. Rather like the Latin bible, it's not for the public, it's to be shelved away. And yet it has been read here". The hour I spent listening to the report - including ten minutes of reading - seemed to consist of a stream of minutes and memos from just before the 2003 invasion of Iraq that basically said the same thing: "this is going to be expensive, we don't have any money".

### TRAIN STRIKES OFF

For Londoners at the Fringe hoping for a comedy/tragedy journey home thanks to strikes affecting the Virgin Trains East Coast routes on the final weekend of the Festival - well, bad news. The strikes have been suspended which means - as we go to press - things should be operating as normal. Which I think means you

can expect a comedy/tragedy journey home.

### SOME FRINGE FEUDING

Followers of classic Fringe feuds will have enjoyed the piece in The Scotsman this weekend about the Edinburgh Digital Entertainment Festival which has taken over the Assembly Rooms this year. The digital fest is promoted by William Burdett-Coutts of the Assembly venues, whose Fringe operations were based around the Assembly Rooms for years, before Salt n Sauce Promotions and the team behind The Stand won the rights to stage Fringe shows there in 2012. Their stint in the New Town building ended last summer, and they reckon that having the digital festival in the complex instead hasn't worked, simply helping the Old Town regain its dominance of the Festival. "George Street is now dead a lot of the time, it looks a mess and all the work we've done trying to drag people away from the Old Town has gone backwards by five years" said Salt'n Sauce director Kenny O'Brien. "They obviously have an axe to grind", countered Burdett-Coutts. "What we're doing is extremely valid and the reaction we've had has been extraordinary. I'd be the first to admit it has not had the enormous numbers I'd love to have through, but lots of people are very impressed with what we're doing". Whether or not

Edinburgh's festival month actually needs something digital, you definitely can't beat some classic Fringe feuding.

### ALL NEW PODCAST

As I think we may have mentioned once or twice, this is our 21st year covering the Edinburgh Festival, and to celebrate we launched a brand new podcast! TW:TALKS will come out all year round and see us chat to some of favourite people from the worlds of comedy, theatre, cabaret, spoken word, music, musicals and beyond. We kick things off with five interviews with former ThreeWeeks cover stars which we recorded here at the Fringe earlier this month. The first of those interviews - with Mark Thomas - is already online, plus look out for future editions in which we talk to Brendon Burns, Susan Calman, Lucy Porter and Mark Watson. Tune in and sign up at [thisweektalks.com](http://thisweektalks.com)

### MORE FRINGE FIRSTS

Back to awards now, and The Scotsman has dished out another batch of its Fringe First awards for new plays at the Festival. And the second batch goes to two Traverse shows - 'Daffodils (A Play With Songs)' and Mark Thomas's 'The Red Shed'; and three Summerhall shows - 'Faslane', 'Us / Them' and 'Two Man Show'; plus 'Fabric' at Underbelly and 'Tank' at the Pleasance.

### AN AMUSED MOOSE

Comedy awards now, and the Amused Moose Comedy Awards took place at theSpace @ Symposium Hall last weekend. The overall winner was Larry Dean (pictured left) while Neal Portenza was runner up. The other finalists were: Eric Lampaert, Flo & Joan, James Loveridge, John Robertson, Laura Lexx, Pippa Evans, Sleeping Trees and Tom Ballard.

### MORE AWARDS

Week Three is the busy week for awards at the Festival of course, so we'll have some more updates in the TW Daily email bulletin - which you can sign up to at [threeweekseidinburgh.com/signup](http://threeweekseidinburgh.com/signup). We will also present our own Editors' Awards - to the ten things we think made this year's Festival extra special - on the last Sunday of the Fringe at theSpace @ Symposium Hall.



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## INTERVIEWS

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All our interviewees answer even more questions online PLUS check all the Q&As from this Fringe [threeweekseidinburgh.com](http://threeweekseidinburgh.com)

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## Joe Derosa: Moving forward at the Fringe

American stand-up Joe Derosa keeps himself busy writing, performing, acting, podcasting and a whole lot more.

Though you might recognise him from his recurring role in 'Better Call Saul'.

But comedy is his first love, and this Fringe he has brought his show 'Zero Forward Progress' to Edinburgh for a new audience to enjoy. We caught up with Joe to discuss the show, his varied career, and what he's learned since arriving at the Festival.

**CM: So, tell us a little about what you're exploring in 'Zero Forward Progress'.**

JD: The general theme is how annoyed I get with people, particularly 'progressive types'. You know, the coffee shop pontificators. All intellect, zero common sense. I find them to be arrogant, self-important, entitled and, worst of all, the reason we can never truly evolve, because they constantly think they can fix everything that's flawed instead of abandoning it and moving on.

**CM: So the show is influenced by real life experiences?**

JD: Absolutely. I live in LA, so I deal with these coffee shop activists on a regular basis. They all fancy themselves, so enlightened and inspiring. They'll tell you "we need to do better", yet their only concept of change is blocking people they don't like on Twitter.

**CM: What made you decide to bring the show to Edinburgh?**

JD: I've been doing this hour for a little while now and we shoot it for Comedy Central in the fall, so I thought it'd be a perfect time to finally do the Fringe, and run the hell out of it in front of a



Photo by David P Scott

brand new audience in a different part of the world.

**CM: How are you getting on with Edinburgh?**

JD: It's been an amazing time. Exhilarating, terrifying, rewarding, frustrating, energising and exhausting. I think, for a comic, this is the kind of experience that separates the men and women from the boys and girls.

**CM: You don't just do stand-up, of course. The blog I have for you here also lists you as - in alphabetical order - an actor, an author, a director, an editor, a musician, a podcaster, a producer and a TV writer! Which takes up most of your time? Which is the most satisfying?**

JD: All of it is extremely gratifying, but stand-up is always king, both time wise and beneficially. It's how I came into show business and I'm sure it's what I'll be doing when it's time to leave. The other stuff comes and goes, with great consistency, but all of it combined could never replace stand-up.

**CM: How did you first get into comedy?**

JD: I always loved stand-up, but I fell into this. A guy who managed a bar where I grew up thought I was funny and offered me a weekly comedy show. It was a small bar in a seemingly smaller town, so I had nothing to lose.

Little did I know it would turn into a career. Two years later I was living in New York City doing comedy full time.

**CM: What inspires you? Who influences you?**

JD: The stand-up of George Carlin. And George Carlin.

**CM: You've done lots of TV work, appearing on some very high profile shows. What would you consider to be the highlight?**

JD: 'Better Call Saul' has definitely been the highlight. I still can't believe I'm on the show. I never imagined being part of something that cool. It's so humbling and flattering to be included in it. I'm very lucky.

**CM: We mentioned all those different projects you've done beyond stand-up. But are there any particular projects you'd still like to do?**

JD: I write a lot of short horror fiction - you can find my monthly column 'Some Severe Situations on fangoria.com' - and I hope one day to have that stuff published as an anthology book. I also definitely want to make some interesting television in the comedy-horror and comedy-science fiction vein. Hopefully, some of that will be based on my stories.

**CM: I know you've released some albums. I originally**

**assumed that was all comedy, but there's music too, isn't there? Tell us about your music output!**

JD: I wrote and played music, never professionally, long before I ever started doing stand-up, so it's always been a hobby near and dear to my heart. I release the current music I'm doing under the name Joe DeRosa And Demon Riot. It's all on Bandcamp. The stuff on there is essentially electro-pop. But the new material I'll be releasing soon is way more like Tom Waits and Captain Beefheart, except with keyboards and 808's instead of guitars and live drums.

**CM: Tell us something that you have learned during the Edinburgh Festival?**

JD: Not to be cheesy, but I honestly learned to always accept the challenge. It'd be so easy to come into a situation like this, feel out of place and overwhelmed, and throw your hands up and say, "This is impossible". But when you force yourself to keep an open mind and adapt and accept this invaluable experience, warts and all, it makes you a better performer that you ever thought possible.

**CM: What you are planning to do after the Edinburgh Festival.**

JD: Sleep. And not drink.

Joe DeRosa: Zero Forward Progress is on at Underbelly Cowgate until 28 Aug.

## Casting Call Woe: Audition nightmares relived

Casting Call Woe is a blog that gathers together some of the worst 'casting calls' to come out of the film and TV industries, as producers seek actors for upcoming projects. Some are funny, some are bizarre and some reveal the sexist thought processes that are too often employed by productions-in-development.

The anonymous actress behind the blog - who tweets as @ProResting - has teamed up with Tiff Stevenson to turn the whole venture into a live show. Which sounds pretty damn interesting. We had to find out more...

**CM: So, how does the show work?**

PR: Tiff Stevenson, Wendy Wason and I are joined by two guests every day and we read out some of the very worst casting calls that are out there, while sharing our awful audition experiences.

**CM: Can you give us some examples of the kind of casting calls you're sharing?**

PR: Well, the ones we use in our publicity are good examples. Things like "she's past her prime - aged 23-30",

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or "looking for an actress with big boobs to play a sexy nun".

**CM: What sort of guests have been involved with the show?**

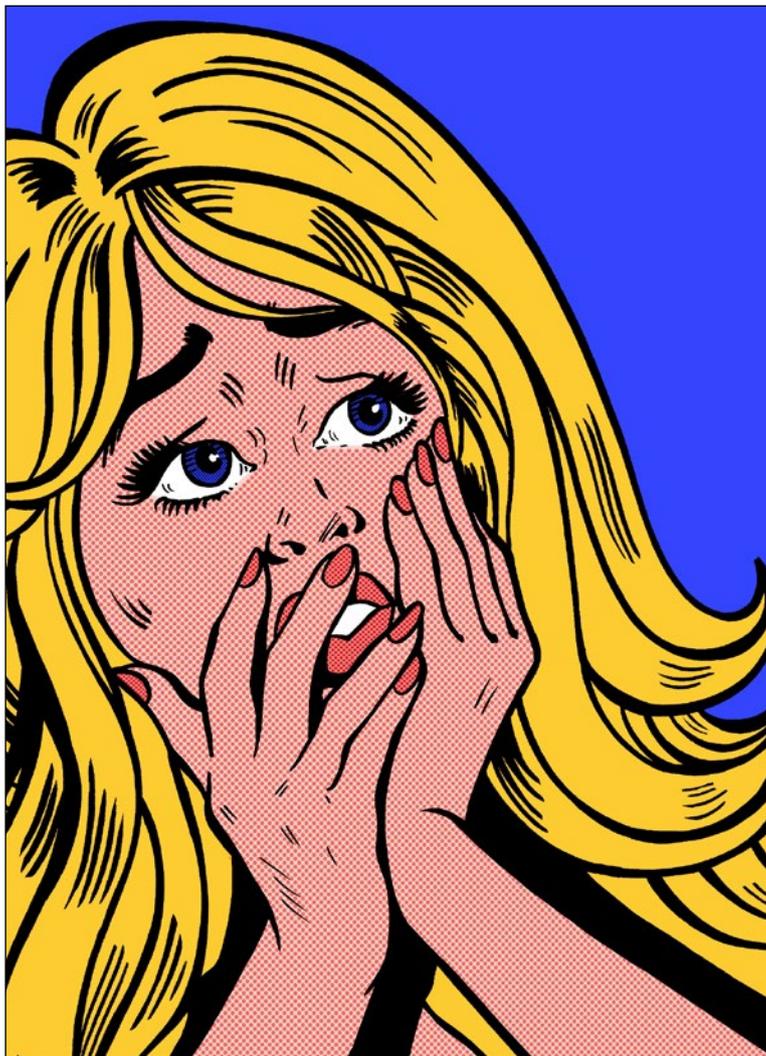
PR: As we speak, so far we've been joined by Mary-Lynn Rajskub, Sally Phillips, Russell Howard, Sarah Kendall, Phil Wang and Phil Nichol. Coming up we've got the likes of Arabella Weir, Val McDermid, Lily Bevan, Shappi Khorsandi, Zoe Lyons and Ed Gamble.

**CM: The show is listed in theatre, but sub-genre-ed as comedy. Obviously, some of what you are covering is kinda depressing and an actual problem - but are you able to find humour in it? Do the audiences laugh?**

PR: Yes, in fact, one of the main points of our show is encouraging the audience to laugh because, if they didn't, we'd all just be sat crying for an hour. Although we want to highlight the problems within the acting industry, we also want to give the audience an insight into the sheer ridiculousness of it all. And the audiences really do laugh, be it at a truly awful casting call or a guest's incredible audition experience.

**CM: Do you find that audiences are shocked by what they hear?**

PR: Very much so. The casting side of the acting industry is usually very well hidden, so it's something that people



don't normally get to see, and hearing what actually goes out to make what they watch on TV and at the cinema is quite a shock.

**CM: The show is an extension of your blog, of course. What steps led to it becoming a live show?**

PR: Tiff and I had been discussing the idea of turning it into a live show for quite some time, because we felt the casting calls would have a real impact when read out loud. So we put together a show for the Phoenix Fringe in London back in February, discovered it worked really well, and now here we are!

**CM: Clearly, the show has important points to make - do you think this production could be instrumental in bringing about change? Even if it's only in the way performers respond to being treated like this?**

PR: I think so, because the main point is about raising awareness and, by doing that, we hope to encourage better representation within all parts of the industry.

**CM: You mention the Bechdel Test in your press release for the production. Can you explain what that is and why it is relevant to the show?**

PR: The Bechdel Test looks at the representation of women in fiction so, in

order for a book or film to pass the test, there need to be two named female characters who, at some point, talk to each other about anything other than men. You'd think it's an easy test to pass but you'd be amazed at the films that don't manage it, which is something that we look at within the show.

**CM: What made you decide to bring this to Edinburgh? Are the shows going well here?**

PR: Edinburgh is such a wonderful place to develop a show and reach new audiences, plus it's full of performers who will really identify with it. We're really enjoying the show and we're getting to work with new guests every day, which is wonderful as each show is completely unique.

**CM: Are there plans to take it to other festivals or on tour?**

PR: We certainly hope so! We'd would love to take the show to as many people as possible and expand on the types of guests that we can get involved.

**CM: And finally, what's your personal plan for post-Edinburgh?**

PR: Eat vegetables, sleep, catch up on all the new casting calls I've missed this month, and then work out what happens next.

Casting Call Woe is on at the Gilded Balloon Museum until 28 Aug.

/theatre



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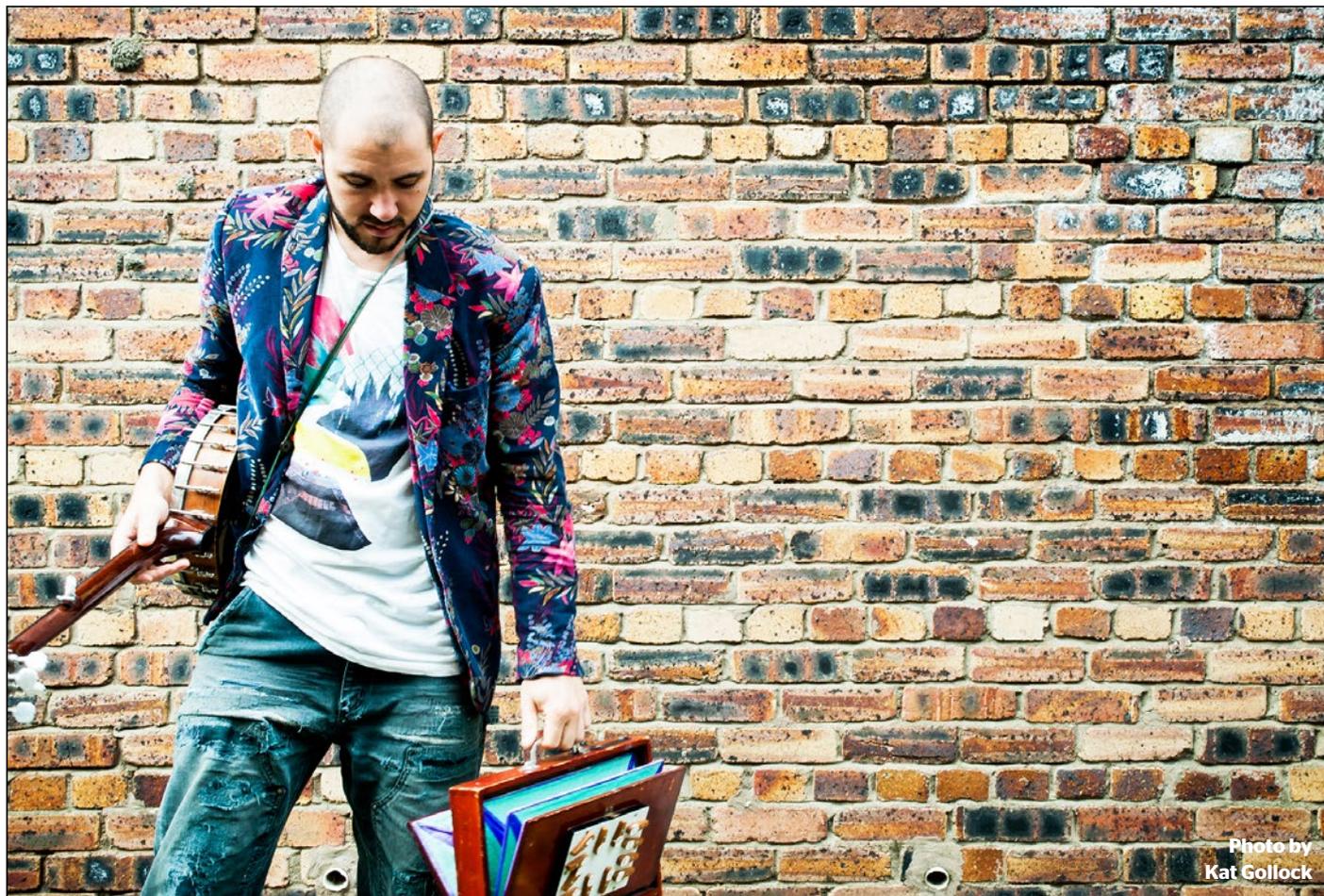
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## Gideon Irving: From the living rooms of the

Gideon Irving can usually be found performing his music in the living rooms of his audience. But occasionally the multi-instrumentalist and raconteur is persuaded into a more conventional performance space, which is good news for us here at the Fringe.

Having performed at last year's Festival with his friend and occasional collaborator Hubcap, this year he is performing solo show 'Songs, Space Travel And Everything In-Between'. We caught up with Gideon to find out about the show, his music making, and why the living room makes such a great venue.



**CM: Can you tell us a bit about what we can expect from 'Songs, Space Travel And Everything In-Between'?**

GI: I've actually spent a great amount of energy keeping my audiences in the dark! I have this unusual privilege of playing in homes to audiences that have little to no idea about what will happen. They come expecting some folk fellow to strum some banjo tunes and they get something considerably more... well, involved.

I like that people still come to shows with limited information. I like having a room full of risk takers. This is why I don't have any bits of any shows I've made on YouTube. But I'll say that the show is eclectic, musical and from my gut. I call my style 'stove top folk' and, when pressed further, I describe it as "a bit of this and some of that". I can appreciate if people find that terribly annoying!

**CM: No, we're fine with that! Though, maybe you could tell us more about all the different instruments you play?**

GI: In this show I've got my banjo Rosana, my bouzouki, guitar, whirly tube, scacciapensieries, harmonica, mbira, shruti box, bells, chimes, electronics and good ol vocal chords. The shruti box is a devotional Indian instrument designed to drone and chant with. The whirly tube is a piece

of house hardware that sings like an orca. The bouzouki is an eight stringed tear drop that thinks its a mandolin while it pretends to be a lute. And the scacciapensieri is an unnecessarily Italian word for a small mouth twanger that packs a big punch. I also often travel with a musical saw, harmonium, accordion and ocean harp, but folks will have to see some other show some other time for those treasures.

**CM: Despite all the music, the show is listed in the Fringe's theatre programme. Why did you go that route?**

GI: We categorise it that way because it is a piece of theatre rooted in music. I play songs, but I play them theatrically, and there is a continuity to the piece that has an arc and an accumulated meaning by the end. Whenever it feels hard to list a show as simply 'theatre' or 'music' - or something else entirely, like, say 'magic popcorn burlesque ballet gameshow' - I feel like I've done my job. A good show to me is something that travels across those lines and has a variety of surprises.

**CM: You often play in people's homes, and I sense that's the space you like best. How has it been performing in a more conventional venue?**

GI: I love the venue, the staff, and my incredible team that have brought

me out here and have made the show possible. It's sincerely been a wonderful time thus far.

Though yes, I'm more comfortable playing in people's homes. That's my top love, my primary partner, even though I'm polyamorous when it comes to spaces for shows. I miss getting to hang out with my audiences before the show and well into the night. I miss staying the night at my host's home and learning about their lives and their crap and their worries and hopes, thus home shows remain my main endeavour. And I reckon they will remain the focus of my performance practice for a long long time.

At the Fringe, it's wondrous to have help setting up my show in fifteen minutes - in homes it takes two hours! It's wondrous to be able to rest afterwards and not be on on on all the time. It's just a different glorious beast. In the fall I'll be bringing a larger version of this show to a full set we are building in a New York theatre. I'll be playing in that venue seven times a week, but I'll also be going home to stay with a different audience member every night. That marriage of the two experiences should be interesting.

While I'm open to new and exciting performance opportunities my hunt is always for connections. I find 90% of my hosts for future tours from my audiences writing down names and contacts of folks they think might

enjoy hosting me and my show in their home on maps I provide after my performances.

My hunt, logistically, is always for new hosts in new places. Finding hosts in small rural towns, in countries I've never heard of, on boats, finding enough hosts in a particular place to warrant a tour. My hunt creatively is how to make more, different, better, funner shows both by myself and with new collaborators. When I imagine those new shows I see them in the warm glow of a living room somewhere between the casserole and the couch.

**CM: How did you start out playing in people's homes?**

GI: I was in a band with two dear friends. We had just finished playing 62 shows in 68 days across 7000 miles of America. We were on the right track, getting better and playing in more prestigious venues - but it was not a thrilling format for me.

I'm an old ancient grandpa of a man in a 30 year old's body. I don't like clubs and bands and dancing. I like to have a drink, but in an arm chair preferably watching a five year old discover some new wonder of life in a living room. I like talking to people instead of shouting at them. So when I saw Julian Koster, the saw player of hit 90s band Neutral Milk Hotel, play a show in a living room in Bayside Queens to eighteen rapt audience members I was

hooked. Here was this glorious weirdo doing whatever he could imagine in the warmest, most intimate of spaces. That was my kind of club!

I wanted to start singing my songs, find my voice and find my show. Playing in people's homes seemed a great place to workshop material. My best friend Hubcap recommended I do my first tour in New Zealand. He pointed out that all the traveling acts just pass through the main three cities there. I was interested in staying fairly rural to play small towns. He said they would just be so excited and touched that you made the effort to get to such a small place they should be a receptive audience, even if you are still figuring out what it is you do. He was spot on.

I toured on my bicycle Beowulf with my trailer of instruments, Wiglaf, dragging behind. I peddled over 3000 miles - very slowly with all the baggage - and played in 80 homes. That was the first time I played my songs for people. It was full on. I hit my physical and emotional limit about 30 times in that tour, but I emerged with a voice and a sense of what kind of shows I wanted to make.

Playing in homes is the perfect place to workshop material and to grow a thick skin as a performer. There is no hiding from your audience. You see everyone's face, there is no spotlight blinding you. You see what works and what fails immediately. You see when

## world to the Edinburgh Fringe

people are laughing, when they are crying and when they are sleeping and you know what to hold on to and what to let go of.

I enjoy not knowing what to expect. I don't know what kind of home it will be and I know very little about the host. I love seeing how people live, perhaps learning how I want to live, what kind of life I want to make by way of exposure to so many others, so many choices and stories. Intimacy is often expedited in this curious way.

After I have given my show and thrown my heart against the wall I've only got the night and the next morning with folks, and as a result people often open up to me. I gave my show and many are excited to reciprocate and share their feelings, their treasures, their woe, their advice, their sacred lil something. It often feels like an exchange of big gifts in a short period of intense time.

It also makes me feel special and unique. I'm gonna die really soon and I think feeling special or creating a system of life where I can feel special, or people tell me I'm special, helps me feel a bit further from my inevitable reality. Perhaps being from America, a culture which allegedly celebrates individuality at every turn, and from a family that pounded in to my brain, for

better and for worse, that I was special, has something to do with my drive towards stepping outside the format.

**CM: You mentioned Hubcap. You were here last year performing with him. Are the two of you likely to return to the Fringe together any time soon?**

GI: Hubcap is my boy, my spirit brother, my platonic husband in song and play. We had a ball at the Fringe last year and would love to return at some point. Alas he is a professor, a podcaster, a jazzman and a real husband, so I only get him a few weeks a year. We are currently in development with a kids home show that we would like to bring to small theatres as well. I take him when I can get him and we have a painful amount of fun.

**CM: What do you like about Edinburgh, and what made you want to come back?**

GI: The money! The big sweaty stacks of money that I roll around in every night. Just kidding. I think about five people actually make money at Edinburgh and I haven't met any of them yet.

It's fun! And I learn a great deal. The

shows I love teach me about what I want to make. The shows I don't dig teach me about what I want to avoid. I love a show that I hate. I think it's beautiful and astounding how much effort we can put into something as artists and still have it not work. I see shows I don't connect to all the time and I'm like "wow! there was so much work that went into that thing that did not connect to me!" I appreciate it. I appreciate this ridiculous ludicrous effort to make a thing and connect.

When I love a show it's magic. I'm thrilled to be a person! I didn't really go to college. School was always a miserable and painful experience for me. My education has been people, places and shows. Last year at the Fringe I saw 60 shows! I loved 30 of em and ten blew my mind! What a place to be! I'd say I wanted to come back for 50% fun, 50% education, and 112% gorsintivistoropple.

**CM: What or who influences you?**

GI: Pranks. Nothing makes me happier than hearing about or creating a friendly prank. Which is to say, I like surprise. Seeing, hearing, doing, being a part of a good surprise has been a big influence.

Shows that unfold and bring me to

places I completely did not expect. Sounds I did not expect. Anything I don't expect feels influential. Life is a series of patterns and habits and comforts and then wham-whopadooey, something different happens. I like that. I wanna make those and I like when they are made for me. Music wise I love You Won't, Sondheim, Julia Read, Raky Sastri, Dave Harrington, Hubcap... At the Fringe I've felt moved and super influenced by 'Randy Writes A Novel', The Gandini Jugglers, Desiree Burch, 'Only Bones' and Nina Conti.

**CM: Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?**

GI: The big unfulfilled ambition that's on the docket is The Horse Tour. I am currently planning to tour a new show through people's homes on horseback across at least 8000 miles of America in 2019. I'll be traveling with three horses: one to ride, one to pack and one to rest. All three will rotate regularly and I'll be playing in a different home once or twice a week for eighteen months.

I've already been working on it for a year and I've given myself to September 2019 to depart because it's a really complicated thing to plan! You've gotta find the hosts and the

homes, places to stay in between, farriers for every six to eight weeks, support volunteers every 200-300 miles who are willing to pick up a horse if it needs medical attention while I carry on with the other two, routes and alternate routes and contingency backup alternate routes, campsites, horse motels - yeah that's a real thing! - feed and water, and and and I gotta get horses and learn how to ride the damn things!

It's a lot, but I'm doing it. Could be a bad idea, but I reckon it's a great bad idea. I'm really taking the time to do it right and be safe for myself and my travel companions. I've been enjoying reading everything horse lately

After The Horse Tour I'd like to travel by foot, by boat and by fixed wing aircraft. I'd also like to make a show to be performed to just one person at a time and do a tour that focuses on hermit hosts. And there's the kids show with Hubcap. Plus I'd like to do a show that is not language dependent, to be toured in non-English speaking countries and communities. And then there's things like "operation turtle soar", but that one is currently private!

My Name Is Gideon: Songs, Space Travel And Everything In-Between is on at Pleasance Courtyard until 29 Aug.

/theatre

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## Melanie Gall: Come meet the Opera Mouse

**Internationally-acclaimed vocalist Melanie Gall has two shows at the Fringe this year, though in one she shares the stage with an ambitious mouse and a diva of an ostrich.**

**Children's show 'Opera Mouse' aims to introduce its young audience to classical music while keeping them very much entertained. We caught up with Melanie to find out more about the show, and her many other musical projects.**

**CM: Let's start at the start, tell us a little about 'Opera Mouse'?**

MG: In Opera Mouse I share the stage with two mouse puppets, Tommy and Tilly, and Odille, a stuffed ostrich - who is a bit of a diva, if you ask me! The story is about a young mouse named Tilly who dreams about being an opera singer. And even though she is told again and again that a mouse can't sing, she keeps trying and keeps practicing until she succeeds.

**CM: What inspired the story? What gave you the idea?**

MG: Well, as far as inspiration, the story isn't that far from my own musical journey. I mean, I'm not a mouse - or an ostrich for that matter! - but throughout my musical education I was told again and again that it was almost impossible to build a career



Photo by David P Scott

singing classical music. And I, too, kept trying until I succeeded.

I had the idea for the show back in 2011 at the Vancouver Fringe. My venue was beside a puppet store, and in a judgement lapse brought on by Fringe exhaustion, I vowed to another performer that if I sold out my run, I would invest in a mouse puppet. Because, as I apparently said, "Every girl needs a mouse puppet!"

And then, once I had the puppet, it somehow just seemed to be the next logical step to write an opera-themed show and devote a large part of my career to performing for children...

**CM: Our reviewer felt that this would be a great introduction to opera for small children - is it your aim to open minds to classical music or is the motive purely to entertain?**

MG: For me, making classical music accessible to children is key to ensuring that the genre isn't lost. In so many schools, musical education is not a focus. And even when children are exposed to classical music, it is often presented as something that is prohibitively difficult to accomplish, and that they should merely observe as a passive audience member

However, just over a century ago, opera arias were not only presented onstage, but they were also sung in the street as popular music. Children whistled themes from orchestras. And if classical music is presented as something both entertaining and accessible from the outset, both future musicians and future audiences will be fostered from a young age.

**CM: What's it like playing to audiences of children? How does it differ from performing for adults?**

MG: Playing to audiences of children can be the most frustrating and the most rewarding onstage experience ever. Sometimes both, at the same time. Kids will freely express their emotions: If they love what they're seeing, you know. If they hate it, you also know.

Adaptability is key, because no two performances are ever exactly the same. The other day, a small child in the front row slowly and methodically ate her programme without taking her eyes off the puppets. Earlier in the week, a toddler climbed onto the stage, calmly collected the puppets, and took them back to her seat. This morning, a toddler joyfully shrieked along whenever I sang a high note!

Often kids won't want to participate. Often kids will try to hijack the show by participating too much. So a good children's performer will make the audience feel valued and necessary, while subtly adapting the show to match each situation.

**CM: The show seems pretty well travelled and has been to a number of festivals. Was the show developed with festivals in mind? Do you adapt it according to where you are performing?**

MG: Yes, the show was initially developed with festivals - and theatres - in mind. However, it has expanded to a number of different and unexpected locations, from schools to orphanages to large-scale private events.

The story is always the same, however the manner of telling it is absolutely adapted for each location. In Sudan, I performed 'Opera Mouse' entirely in French. In rural Morocco, I spoke a line and a translator repeated it in Arabic.

I have performed it to children who had never heard a woman sing before. I have performed to children who have never seen theatre before. Each location and situation has its own challenges and its own rewards.

**CM: You have a 'grown up' show on at the Fringe as well, don't you? Tell us about that.**

MG: Yes! My 'grown up' show is a cabaret/concert of Edith Piaf and Jacques Brel music. I tell stories about their lives and songs, sing as many of Piaf and Brel's hits as I can fit into 50 minutes, and even teach the audience one of Piaf's most famous songs and lead the entire theatre in a singalong.

Of all the shows I've performed, this is hands-down my favourite. So many people come in already loving the songs, and often they start cheering before the singing even begins. The music is absolutely fantastic, and I adore singing in French.

**CM: Presumably you are pretty inspired by Piaf and Brel? Have they, or anyone else, influenced you in your career?**

MG: Both Piaf and Brel have absolutely inspired my career. Not just through their singing, but through their influence on French popular music.

However, another major influence in my life and career is Sophie Tucker. Sophie was a Vaudevillian singer whose career spanned over five decades. She was smart, funny, resourceful and was not afraid to take artistic risks.

Sophie's career withstood the death of vaudeville, two world wars, early recorded sound, radio, television... she was an institution for half a century. And she worked so, so hard throughout. Sophie's drive and creative way of approaching her career is constantly inspiring to me.

**CM: As someone with an irresponsibly large yarn stash, I couldn't help noticing on reading your blog that there seems to be a bit of a knitting theme going on - can you tell us a bit about this?**

MG: You caught me out! Yes, I'm a knitter. I caught the bug from my little sister, and my knitting-related activities range from hosting a bi-weekly podcast - The Savvy Girls Podcast - to singing historic knitting songs, to penning a book about wartime knitting culture. And yes, I too have an irresponsibly large yarn stash. I mean, who doesn't stuff yarn in every available crevice in their flat?

'Opera Mouse' is on at theSpace @ Surgeon's Hall until 27 Aug. Piaf and Brel: The Impossible Concert' is on at the same venue, also through to 27 Aug.

## Phil Dunning: Meet the People's Prince

**You may have seen Phil Dunning performing at the Fringe before as one quarter of sketch group Oyster Eyes. This time he's taking to the stage alone, though as a plethora of different characters, a feat only possible thanks to an impressive array of wigs.**

**We caught up with Phil to find out more about 'The People's Prince', going it alone at the Fringe, and all that hair.**

**CM: So tell us some more about 'The People's Prince'. It's a character comedy show, right? What kinds of characters can we expect?**

PD: Yes, it's very much character comedy. I have a lot of influences - from drag to Disney to musicals - so think of all those things mashed together into a weird hybrid and you'll come close to the kind of characters I perform. I don't really stick to a specific theme when creating the different characters. If I do a voice or accent and laugh smugly to myself, it goes into the show.

**CM: I hear there are lots of different characters over the hour. What made you go that route?**

PD: I began the show-making process thinking I would write about four characters. Then I started trying out short versions of various different characters at a few gigs in London and a lot of them worked, so I didn't really want to cut any. Then things got really

out of hand and I ended up having around 20 characters that I'd grown too fond of. So now I have a ridiculous amount of characters in the space of an hour. The backstage wig changing action is so messy!

**CM: So, are you 'The People's Prince' in the title?**

PD: Yes, I'm the People's Prince. It's a self-indulgent title, but a boy's gotta dream big if he wants his big break on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame and his name in lights on the New York boulevard.

**CM: How would you describe your style of comedy?**

PD: It's difficult to describe. It is everything I love merged together in one big extravaganza. Think drag, cabaret, songs, spoofs and wigs. It's stupid, camp and surreal.

**CM: Do you have any particular comedy influences?**

PD: I would say French And Saunders would be my biggest influence. I grew up watching their unbelievably wonderful film and TV spoofs on repeat. My VHS tapes were full of them with 'DO NOT TAPE OVER' written on each one. I also am obsessed with Chris Lilley. His characters are so perfect. Also, I LOVE Lisa Kudrow. She is a complete genius. Her sitcom, 'The Comeback', is my favourite piece of television comedy ever. I'd like to be her.

**CM: We previously saw you at the Fringe as one quarter of sketch group Oyster Eyes, of course. What made you decide it was time for a solo outing?**

PD: We did Edinburgh for three years together and I do really miss them. We took a break, because everyone was busy doing different things, and we haven't really come back from the break yet, so I decided to try a solo show. I know lots of people doing solo shows so I thought, how hard can it be? Turns out, unbelievably hard.

**CM: Ha! With that in mind, what advice would you give to anyone else presenting their debut hour?**

PD: Commit fully to your comedy, whatever it is. Not everyone will like it, but you will find people that do, and when you find them it's worth all the stress and heartache.

Reviews can be harsh, especially when it's your first year and you're still trying to develop your comedy. I cried for a whole day when I got a nasty review. Then I felt guilty because there are people dying in the world and I was crying over that. But it's crazy how much of a bubble the Fringe is. The outside world doesn't seem to exist any more.

The tip is to find supportive friends and cling on tight to them. So many people at the Fringe are going through, or have been through, similar situations, so talking to them really

helps. I've just realised how dramatic this sounds. My main advice is to have fun, and if it goes well that's great, but if it doesn't, as Aaliyah would say, dust yourself off and try again.

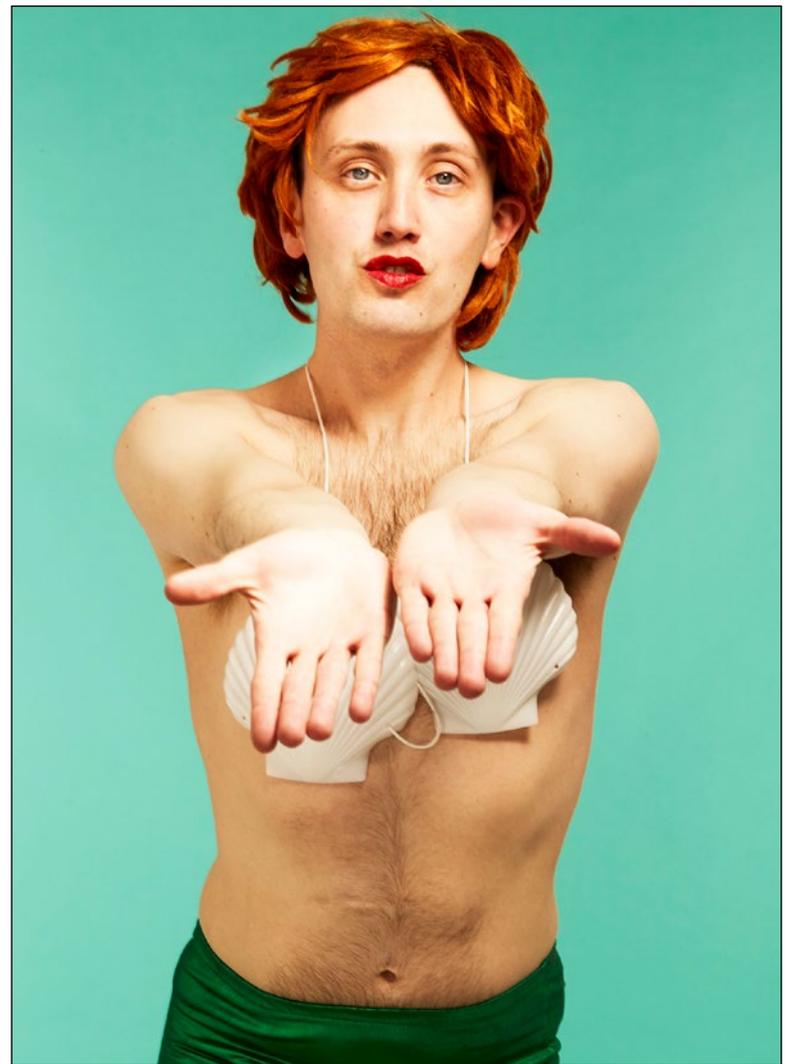
**CM: How does being at the Fringe on your own compare to your stints here with the sketch group?**

PD: I loved performing with Oyster Eyes. It was so nice to have other people to cry with when it was going badly. Now I cry on my own into a gin soaked duvet. We were very close as friends - and still are - so it always felt nice to walk around Edinburgh pretending we were the 'Sex And The City' girls chatting about sex and drinking cocktails. I was the Carrie of the group.

**CM: You mentioned the wigs. Do you have a favourite?**

PD: I love all wigs. My favourite Christmas present I ever got from Santa was a long blonde wig. I wore it so much and did performances for my parents' friends. They didn't really know what to make of it, but I really committed. I weirdly like wigs that are a bit scraggly and ratty. I have one in the show that makes me look like a weasel and I love it.

'Phil Dunning: The People's Prince' is on at Pleasance Courtyard until 28 Aug.



/comedy

★★★★★ EDFRINGE REVIEW  
★★★★★ ED FESTIVALS MAGAZINE

★★★★★ NKELO EDIN GUIDE

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

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## ThreeWeeks with Mary Lynn Rajskub

**You may be more familiar with Mary Lynn Rajskub for her TV work, not least as Chloe from '24'. But this August it's all about the comedy, as she imports her stand-up for the Edinburgh audience with a debut Fringe show '24 Hours With Mary Lynn Rajskub'. We caught up with Mary Lynn to find out about the show, and how stand-up and acting compare.**

**CM: Hello! OK, lets start with the show. Is there a central theme?**

MLR: The theme of my show is love and how to hold on to it.

**CM: What inspired you to create the show?**

MLR: I love doing stand-up in the States, and my son and husband almost always make it into the act.

So I decided to deepen the story and explore what happens when a mother and a wife whose husband doesn't talk to her very much goes on the road as a comic, and encounters a young male yoga teacher who helps miniature horses!

**CM: How did you go about creating the show? Had you road-tested material before putting it altogether?**

MLR: It all started with my usual stand-up, which is based on my life. I then wrote this into a script and started performing it as one long show for a director. Though while I was going through that process, I would also try pieces in the comedy clubs in LA.

**CM: What made you decide to bring the show to Edinburgh?**

MLR: My producer, Marshall Cordell, has been coming to the Festival and producing shows here for fifteen years. I met him on the set of an independent movie in Cleveland, Ohio. I would work on the movie during the day and do comedy sets at night. Marshall asked me if I had ever thought of doing Edinburgh, and I explained that I had always wanted to do, but never knew how to pull it off.

**CM: How do you feel it's going now you are here? Are you enjoying being part of the festival?**

MLR: I hadn't been to Edinburgh before. It's a magical place and the Festival is inspiring. It is also a huge

challenge to undertake performing every night of the Festival, especially coming from another country with a brand new show in a place I have never been before.

**CM: I must confess, I am much more familiar with your TV work, and have always enjoyed seeing you on the programmes that you have been in. How do you like doing TV stuff compared to doing a live show every night like this?**

MLR: The Edinburgh show is exciting and very challenging. TV is challenging too, but in a different way. And I would say, in a lot of ways, TV is easier, because usually a set is a very safe environment, yet the product has the potential to be seen worldwide, and it is on film forever. Whereas the Festival is different every night, and you never quite know what is going to happen. So each show you start from the beginning, in a sense that no two shows are the same.

**CM: You've referenced '24' in the show's title. What was it like working on that series? Do you have any highly interesting anecdotes to tell us?**

MLR: Ha! I'm not sure what qualifies as a 'highly interesting' anecdote! I was on the show for eight seasons. The crew was like family. I learned how to be a dramatic actress, met my husband and was pregnant during the filming. I experienced a lot of milestones with many of the crew

members, and of course got to work with Kiefer Sutherland, who I knew from the movies as a kid.

**CM: What's the best thing about doing stand-up? Is it exhilarating?**

MLR: Stand-up is a roller coaster and, yes, it can be very exhilarating. This past Saturday night at my show here, I had one of the best audiences I've ever had. I love hearing a wall of laughter, especially when my material expresses something important to me.

**CM: Have you ever had a really, really bad time doing stand-up, though?**

MLR: Yes of course! That's a rite of passage.

**CM: What made you want to be a performer in the first place?**

MLR: I was very shy and quiet when I was younger. I always tried to do the right thing and be a good person. I was studying painting and all of my feelings were bottled up inside. So stand-up was a release and positive expression for me.

**CM: And finally, what's next?**

MLR: Next, I'm going to spend some time back home in LA, getting ready to film a TV show for Amazon called 'Highston' while also continuing to develop material.

24 Hours With Mary Lynn Rajskub is on at Assembly George Square Studios until 28 Aug.

## Phil Jerrod: H



**Phil Jerrod is back at the Fringe with new show 'Hypocrite', in part inspired by him being mugged in a phone box. With hypocrisy the theme, he sounds like just the chap to give us some honest and consistent answers in an interview, so we threw some questions in his general direction.**

**CM: Can you tell us a bit about the content of the show? Why is it called 'Hypocrite'?**

PJ: It's called Hypocrite for a couple of reasons really. The show is all about authenticity. I got mugged this year and was surprised by how I acted. I was very acquiescent - almost helpful. Yet I'd always thought I was the sort of person to fight back, so it made me wonder what else I might be being hypocritical about.

The other reason is because after last year's show I got a review that suggested that I wasn't being authentic on stage. I thought that was quite interesting. I like the space between what's expected to be true and what's expected to be false in stand-up comedy. The idea that I have to be the person I really am baffles me.

But if you think all that sounds a bit worthy - it's still basically a load of stupid jokes about dogs and cats and printer ink - although the mugging is pretty pivotal. It's a huge part of the show.

**CM: So you really were mugged? That's not good. Is doing a show about it in any way cathartic?**

PJ: No it's not cathartic at all really. The



/comedy

## Hypocrite on the Fringe



Photo by  
Kat Gollock

mugging isn't really very important and it's only a very small part of the show. I used to tell a long anecdote about the mugging - but really, it wasn't anything out of the ordinary - the only weird thing about it was that it happened in a phone box like an episode of 'Record Breakers'. But yeah, it really happened. In the show I claim that everything I say is a lie. But that's not strictly true. Most of the stories really happened.

**CM: Your debut Edinburgh show 'Neanderthal' was highly acclaimed - do you feel the success of that has had an impact on your career?**

PJ: You know I really have no idea. The show went really well, but Edinburgh is a bubble so I don't take any of it too seriously. I got good and bad reviews, good and bad audiences, and I wore a selection of different shirts - checked and striped - I had a great time. But it's very hard to say what impact Edinburgh really has on anyone's career. I don't think it makes too much of a difference really.

**CM: How do you feel about returning to Edinburgh? Do you like being here?**

PJ: Well the Edinburgh Festival can really make or break a person's career, so obviously I was nervous to come back. But I'm really enjoying myself this year. As this is my second show it's a very different beast to last year - I'm feeling both more relaxed and a whole load more tense about it.

I was doing tour support for the first six months of the year and this feels like a much more openly clubby, silly hour than 'Neanderthal' was. But I'm enjoying it more as a result. I love the Festival and I really enjoy doing the show - it's just hard to be away from home for such a long time

**CM: How did you get into comedy? Did you always want to be a stand-up?**

PJ: I wanted to travel - to spend a long time away from home and really get around the country. Stand-up is perfect for that. I wanted to be a stand-up for a good many years before I actually had a go. I started because my old boss egged me on. I used to work in a book shop. It was a great job and I really enjoyed working there. We would talk about stand-up all day. It's those conversations that really got me thinking I should do it.

**CM: So did you have lots of 'normal jobs' before breaking into comedy?**

PJ: Yes, I've had loads of proper jobs in my time and I haven't enjoyed any of them. They never lasted very long. I've been a waiter countless times, a cook, a labourer, I've worked in call centres and universities and about a million crappy offices. When I started comedy I was working as an editorial assistant in a publishers. I was stupendously bad at it.

**CM: Is there anyone or anything you'd cite as influences?**

PJ: I'm influenced by all the cool American stand-ups. I'm a big fan of Dave Chappelle and Bill Burr. Also Louis CK, Bill Hicks, Sarah Silverman, George Carlin and Amy Schumer. But my biggest influence is Les Dawson. The man was a genius.

**CM: What's the best thing about being in Edinburgh? What's the worst?**

PJ: The best thing is that all the comedians from all across the country are here - so it's like a big reunion of people you may have only seen once or twice throughout the year. The worst thing is that all the comedians from all across the country are here - so it's like a big reunion of people you may have only seen once or twice throughout the year.

Phil Jerrod: Hypocrite is on at Pleasance Courtyard until 28 Aug.

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### CHILDRENS

#### Beards! Beards! Beards! (Trick Of The Light Theatre)

'Beards! Beards! Beards!' is a strange beast. It's delightfully liberal, as a young girl with two dads sets out on a quest to get her own beard. It ends, as you'd expect, with the cheerful realisation that we live in a "socially progressive world" and we're all free to present ourselves however we choose. The problem, unfortunately, is in the execution. It's incredibly wordy for the 8+ rating, and Trick of the Light try to do too much in an hour: from a rapping Henry the Eighth and a petulant Darwin, via Shakespeare, Rasputin, Lincoln and many more. The songs (particularly the appropriately barbershop harmonies) and constant beard puns are a nice touch, but this production is in need of a serious trim.

Assembly Roxy, until 28 Aug | tw rating 2/5 | [Gemma Scott]

#### Hup (Starcatchers in association with the RSNO and Pleasance Kids)

Two violinists, a cellist and a dancing raccoon-lady welcome the audience

into the imaginary forest of their performance area. The audience is seated on the floor, intimately among the players, leading to a lovely opportunity to be transfixed by myriad pleasures; the props and interactions, colourful scenery and, first and foremost, the music, a lovely original score played with amiable confidence. Raccoon-lady gradually transforms the musicians into imitations of herself, with striped garments, tails and coloured noses, all bar one who resists until (spoiler alert) she too joins in the fun as, ultimately, does the crowd. My little co-reviewer did wander off once or twice (for which there is welcome space and indulgence) but was fulsome and sincere in her applause at the end.

Pleasance Kids at EICC, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Bruce Blacklaw]

### COMEDY

#### Aatif Nawaz: Aatificial Intelligence (Aatif Nawaz / Free Festival)

Aatif Nawaz is a man on a mission with 'Aatificial Intelligence', not to promote

cybernetics but to teach people how to say his name right. But beyond improving our Pakistani pronunciation, Nawaz's comedy exposes the bias and assumptions he deals with every day, in society and the media, in his role as soapbox Muslim, available for comment. Nawaz is a pro at putting his audience at ease, navigating what could be an old-fashioned, "where are you all from?" opener with real warmth. Though the show could be tighter, he tells stories with candour but without presenting them as 'issues'. There is nothing controversial or scandalous in Nawaz's show, but there are some good gags and great camaraderie.

Laughing Horse @The Newsroom, until 28 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Francesca Peschier]

#### Mark Smith: Old Smudge (Berk's Nest / PBH's Free Fringe)

Performing to a packed-out audience, there's something incredibly endearing about Mark Smith, as he leaves the stage before his set to find a chair for a man standing up; "If there are any reviewers in, that's got to be two stars already." There's nothing ground-breaking about Smith's

routine - his style is conventional, observational comedy. He bemoans the awkwardness of small talk and pokes fun at everyone from estate agents to A-list celebrities, but he has an instinctive talent for delivering a joke. It's nothing you haven't seen before, but it is done so well you won't mind; why be innovative when you've mastered the classic? For simple, good quality stand-up, you can't go wrong with 'Old Smudge'.

Cowgatehead, until 27 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Rosie Barrett]

#### Best Boy (Best Boy)

Best Boy are sketch duo Charlie Mizon and Dan Smith, whose comedic personae have them bickering about each other's relative comedic merits throughout this lively show. They have a nice line in audience participation and muck about merrily with the fourth wall to deconstruct their own stuff; both elements come back in a finale which constitutes a pretty memorable call-back. It's rather darker than the jaunty mid-afternoon slot might lead you to expect - once or twice to a needless fault in fact. Dunno about "best", but with a fun recurring riff of sponsored routines, a belting card 'trick', lots of good gags (a few clunkers too, mind) and cracking timing, it's pretty good.

Underbelly Cowgate, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Bruce Blacklaw]

#### Felicity Ward: 50% More Likely To Die (Brett Vincent for Get Comedy in association with Phil McIntyre)

We're about half way through the festival now, but Felicity Ward shows no sign of slowing down. She practically fizzes with energy during this show - she bounds around the stage, laughs at her own (chicken-based) musical interludes and talks like she could keep going for hours. She essentially tells one story, about a time when she left her bag on the bus, but the hour is filled with amusing anecdotes about life as an anxious Aussie living in London. It's loud, it's brash, and Ward is certainly not afraid of making herself look ridiculous. The title is a reference to her mental health issues, something she talks about openly and regularly during her set. Anxiety has never been this funny.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 29 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Gemma Scott]

#### Lou Sanders - What's That Lady Doing? (Berk's Nest and the Pleasance)

In both content and execution, Lou Sanders is gloriously all over the place. The surrealness of her humour, reinforced by the bizarre stage decorations, often has a real intensity to it. She constantly switches her tone, from self-deprecating to "ironic bravado" (her words) to a wild sort of confusion, never letting us settle into any particular 'feel'. Even her (rare) straightforward observations feel weird within the context of the show because they're part of her constant wrong-footing of the audience. Bouncing from childhood memories

to tips for life to character-based sketches, and complete with weird jingles that somehow get stuck in your head, this show is the absolute best kind of bonkers.

Pleasance Dome, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Nina Keen]

#### Myra DuBois: Self AdMyra (So Comedy by arrangement with Gareth Joyner)

With so many celebrity deaths in 2016, Myra DuBois sees plenty of vacancies to fill, so she's here to showcase her talents. She'll sing, perform poetry, crack out a few dance moves and even prove her game show hosting skills. Although at times this feels a little like a checklist of drag clichés, DuBois drew the best laughs when she went off-script and dished out her razor-sharp wit. If there's a line in comedy, Myra DuBois likes to dance dangerously close to it in her heels. There are moments of brilliantly caustic humour that are delivered with a punch of shock-factor, which I'm sure converted a few more adMyras to her fan club.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 28 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Daisy Malt]

#### A Taste Of Planet Caramel (Planet Caramel / PBH's Free Fringe)

Through quick-fire sketch comedy, this trio is rather good at delivering weird little snippets of fun. With a few simple props and plenty of energy, they draw you into their strange world. There are glimmers of comedy genius, particularly in a skit about weight-conscious whales and in a brilliantly dark song from a bin with an inventive new method of recycling. With no sketch lasting longer than 90 seconds, the ones that don't work so well are quickly forgotten - some are just downright baffling. Reminiscent of the surrealist trio Clever Peter, Planet Caramel definitely show promise. Oh, and if you need more persuading, you'll get a Tunnock's Caramel Wafer just for being there.

Opium, until 27 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Daisy Malt]

#### Yaseen Kader: Smile (Tweedle Comedy/Pembroke Players)

Yaseen Kader's depression led him to drop out of university, go to New York and, indirectly, to write this show. There's some admirably candid stuff about mental health issues here, and some funny stuff about online dating, where his self-confessed nerdiness provides the bulk of the comic substance. Unfortunately, those two elements don't quite join up. The depression bit is light on laughs (I know, I know - but it is a comedy show and that takes up about half of it) and, where that seeks to establish narrative, the second half is a series of comic anecdotes. Kader himself acknowledges that he is finding his feet and, with his awkward charm and nice attention to comic detail, he definitely could. Worth encouraging.

Gilded Balloon at the Counting House, until 28 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Bruce Blacklaw]



#### The Tiniest Frog Prince In The World (Brush Theatre)

Puppetry, princes and projectors combine to create the enchanting 'Tiniest Frog Prince in the World'. From Korean group Brush Theatre, comes a joyous retelling of the famous fairytale. The cast beautifully explore the story with such dynamic vitality that its predominantly Korean script doesn't impede the audience's understanding. The prince/frog is a particular stand-out, as the actor magnificently captures the amphibious essence of a frog; hopping, swimming and croaking around the stage. It's a sublime technical achievement from the sound technician, who masterfully controls the performance's atmospheric shifts with a host of different sounds, whilst simultaneously filming the majestic puppet staging for its projection onto the big screen. A charming delight, that'll be cherished by children and parents alike.

C Venues, Until 29 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [John Sampson]

## DANCE

### Closer by Circa (Underbelly Productions)

Acrobatics with a comical, refreshing twist, this fast-paced show contains a variety of apparatuses and styles. All of the performers have incredible strength, balance and flexibility, and seem to perform all the roles traditionally found in acrobatic shows. Mixing aerial acts with floor gymnastics, 'Closer by Circa' has the audience on the edge of their seats, shocked and amazed as the performers push the limits of what the human body can do. The thrilling cast perform with an innocence and excitement that is contagious, and they even bring in audience members to participate! If this review isn't convincing enough, the full standing ovation at the end of the show really speaks for itself!

Underbelly George Square, until 29 Aug | tw rating 4/5 [Pénélope Hervouet]

## MUSICAL

### Techies: The Musical (Guild Musical Theatre Group)

Rehearsals have started and the technical team are...well, mostly pointing screwdrivers in the general direction of a lightbulb. There are few laughs to be had from this new musical - the performances are of varying quality, but it's the script that really lets this young cast down. The characters

are all lazy stereotypes, from the pushy director to the lighting designer who's sick of being ignored. And if you're expecting techie jokes then you'll be disappointed - there's not even the slightest mention of Gaffa tape. The writer seems to lack any understanding of what goes on backstage in a professional theatre, which meant that most of the plot just made no sense. If you're a techie you'll feel insulted watching this.

theSpace on the Mile, until 27 Aug | tw rating 2/5 | [Gemma Scott]

### Unseal / Unseam & Erwartung (CalArts Festival Theatre)

'Unseal / Unseam' is a dark creation, combining both visual and sound elements to create a unique sensory experience. It's supposedly a story of domestic abuse, featuring various tragic female characters, but the complete absence of narrative makes it difficult to understand that intention. Objects such as chains and wire are used both as visual symbols of the woman's suffering and to create sound. Combining different musical genres, such as opera and minimalistic electronic music, this piece is obviously attempting to extend the boundaries of what is defined as music. Despite soprano Micaela Tobin's impressive vocal abilities, the piece is daunting and sometimes cacophonous. The creators are evidently talented and conceptual but this piece will only appeal to a specific audience.

Venue 13, until 27 Aug | tw rating 2/5 [Pénélope Hervouet]

5/5



Photo by  
Karla Gowett

### Bethany Black (Extra) Ordinary (Lee Martin for Gag Reflex)

Bethany Black is a comedienne teetering on the edge of stellar stardom but previously she's had a rough couple of years with multiple bereavements, a broken engagement and enough horrific injuries to put you off roller derby for life. A self-proclaimed cat-loving Sapphic stereotype, Black pulls laughs out of the unlikeliest, often tragic, places with the command of a pro who has been headlining the Apollo for twenty years. Her journey to Channel Four, 'Doctor Who' and steadily rising star status makes for hilarious if sometimes incredulous listening. A total delight. It's a safe prediction that Black's audience won't fit in the intimate space of The Stand 2 for much longer so don't miss this small show with heart and laughs, like her beloved Tardis, bigger on the inside.

The Stand Comedy Club 2, until 28 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Francesca Peschier]

# TW:TALKS

THE PODCAST FROM THREEWEEKS EDINBURGH & THISWEEK LONDON



MARK THOMAS



BRENDON BURNS



SUSAN CALMAN



LUCY PORTER



MARK WATSON

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FIVE 21ST YEAR INTERVIEWS RECORDED AT THE FRINGE  
NEW EDITIONS EVERY THURSDAY ALL YEAR ROUND AT THISWEEKTALKS.COM

### SPOKEN WORD

#### **Animal: Are You A Proper Person? (Tongue Fu in association with No Ordinary Experience)**

A pig and a flamingo make an unlikely pair in 'Animal: Are You a Proper Person?'. Chris Redmond and Anna Freeman chart the evolution of their spirit animals in this beguiling show that blends spoken word, sketches and music. It's a wacky hour full of hilarious encounters with the performers' spirit animals, from the first appearance of Redmond's pig at a childhood drum lesson, to Freeman's flamingo taking flight at a stuffy novelist's party. The brilliant musical accompaniment helps to capture the energy of these creatures, and compliments the production perfectly. This is an infectious show that will have you roaring and singing to the tune of your own spirit animal.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [John Sampson]

### THEATRE

#### **Discretion Guaranteed (Gingerly)**

'Discretion Guaranteed' blends the humorous with the harrowing, in a bold satire from writer Shamim de Brun. Driven by a cast of four, the play tackles issues surrounding femininity in the modern work place, with a predominant focus on sex workers. However, at times it's a little too fast paced, leaving some scenes slightly underdeveloped. Despite this, it's a poignant piece, encapsulated by one character's sarcastic line: "women think talent and education are enough to become successful". The play's strength is its ability to fully confront sensitive issues such as gender discrimination, sex work and rape. It's a daring, thought-provoking debut that won't necessarily come good on the promise outlined by its title.

Paradise at the Vault, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [John Sampson]

#### **One Day Moko (Portable Union)**

Tim Carlsen's 'One Day Moko' was first performed in New Zealand in 2014. Carlsen masterfully inhabits his character, Moko, a happy-go-lucky homeless man, who repeatedly checks in with the audience and asks for song requests. There are some exciting theatrical moments here in Moko's interactions with the audience; we become the police, a bouncer, and other characters in his life. In a nice touch, Moko does all the tech himself, running round the back of the audience to turn the lights on and off. Unfortunately, the show does not hang together very well, something acknowledged by Moko at the end of the show, which is quite frustrating. Come for the character work rather than the story.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 29 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Hannah Greenstreet]

#### **Putting The Band Back Together (Unfolding Theatre)**

'Putting the Band Back Together' is a dedication to the forgotten musical

Photo by James Penlidis



#### **Aunty Donna: New Show (Electric Talent)**

Back in Edinburgh once more, Aunty Donna are here to assault your senses with some of the most ridiculous sketch comedy you'll find. And I mean that in the nicest sense. It's fast and furious and so beautifully weird; I like my comedy off the wall, and Aunty Donna have perfected a style that sets the bar high. They're basically clowns in suits who will sing, dance and maybe even sit in your lap, all while generating enough heat to power the lights in the venue (probably). Their sketches make no sense whatsoever, but that's why they are so utterly addictive. This is superb mayhem that is, quite simply, not to be missed.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 29 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Daisy Malt]

5/5



Photo by James Deacon

#### **Tom Neenan; Vaudeville (Berk's Nest)**

'Vaudeville' begins with a hapless security guard attempting to tell the horrible history of an old vaudeville theatre and the intriguing (often murderous) characters that once inhabited it. Tom Neenan plays all the characters with a mischievous, hilarious enthusiasm. From the pompous Shakespearean actor, to the suave European knife-thrower, to the ventriloquist in constant conflict with his dummy - the characters aren't new, but Neenan's glorious pastiche of actors, critics and other performers is a master class in arch, tongue-in-cheek, but still incredibly clever comedy. The Fringe is the ideal location for this piece, as it's filled with in-jokes, like the classic about threes reading like fours. Neenan's skewing of theatrical conventions and affectations is ideal viewing for the theatrical types currently filling the city.

Underbelly Med Quad, until 28 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Gemma Scott]

instruments we all have hidden away. With The Futureheads frontman Ross Millard on guitar heading up a core band, the show explores the power of music and our relationship with it. Each performance also features a unique house band, made up of musicians found in the hours before the show. The attempted mix of storytelling and music works fairly well, but for me the format is confused. Unfortunately, obscure sections of physical theatre serve only to undermine the emotional telling of a poignant story - that of late artist Mark Lloyd, and his dream to reunite his old band for a charity gig in the final months of his life.

Northern Stage @ Summerhall, until 27 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

#### **Blush (Snuff Box Theatre in association with Underbelly Untapped)**

"I'd like to take out each and every one of their eyeballs," says one character in 'Blush', after her sister's naked photos have been uploaded to the internet and viewed 30,000 times. Charlotte Josephine's important new play explores, in a multifaceted manner, the implications that digital technology has for relationships and intimacy. Josephine and Daniel Foxsmith skilfully take on five characters that are involved in different ways in online shaming. The parts when they speak in turn but not in dialogue are particularly powerful, conveying the isolation of individuals. My only criticism is that the characters were not differentiated enough, which meant the beginning was difficult to

follow. This timely pay makes us feel pity and disgust, but also rage.

Underbelly, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Hannah Greenstreet]

#### **Yuri (August012)**

I'm a fan of the anarchic, of the wilfully illogical, but 'Yuri' was a little too much even for me. It uses its bizarre premise - a childless Welsh couple suddenly have a silent, possibly Russian, teenager thrust upon them - to raise some interesting questions. The pressure to have children, and the strain that can put on a marriage, segues into the myriad tensions and resentments that parents may feel towards their partners. And it's funny too, for the most part, though some gags don't land, and I found the implicit mocking of the mentally ill a little off colour. Mostly though, it was too incoherent, too bizarre for me; not quite a curate's egg, perhaps, but certainly niche.

Underbelly, until 28 Aug | tw rating 3/5 | [Andy Leask]

#### **Callisto: A Queer Epic (Forward Arena)**

'Callisto' is an ambitious play. It tells four stories simultaneously, all focused on queer relationships through history. From a woman living as a man in 1675; to Alan Turing mourning his first love; to a Midwestern woman who falls in love with a porn star; to a futuristic human/artificial intelligence romance. Though the connection between these separate stories is unclear, they all demonstrate genuine, believable relationships, and the comparisons

to 'Cloud Atlas' are not unfounded. Cathaine Pilsworth's costumes are fantastic, really setting each story in context without the need for a set. The performances too were uniformly brilliant, with Phoebe Hames and Mary Higgins as particular stand-outs. Though slightly too long, this is an intriguing set of stories.

Pleasance Dome, until 29 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Gemma Scott]

### Family Values (Ghost Light Theatre Group)

Can anyone really escape their past? Trent and Liam are two brothers with Mafia ties, who go to extreme lengths to leave their bloody history behind. But when two strangers appear on their doorstep, old wounds resurface. With an engrossing plot and a fantastically talented cast, the play is powerful and engaging. It begins in the midst of the action and only slowly does it reveal what has come before. Not for the squeamish, the realistic, bloody fight scenes will leave you cowering in your seat. Luckily, unlike many other action dramas, this is not mindless violence added to support a weak script. This gripping thriller will keep you enthralled - there were audible gasps from the audience.

theSpace on the Mile, until 27 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Rosie Barrett]

### Finders Keepers (Hot Coals Theatre)

'Finders Keepers' is a great piece of physical theatre, about a father and daughter living in a junkyard, whose lives are changed when they find an abandoned baby. The two main characters, played by Jo Sargeant and Claire-Louise English, are delightfully, unapologetically ugly - scraping armpit hair off with a knife and spraying nail clippings. The puppet-baby is manipulated with great skill, though the loud crying becomes increasingly grating after a while. Told entirely without words, the play is designed to appeal to both hearing and D/deaf audiences, and it does this admirably, with visual cues to indicate the sound effects. Hot Coals Theatre have found the perfect balance between humour, sadness and sincerity in this heart-warming show.

ZOO, until 27 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Gemma Scott]

### The Other (Gaël Le Cornec / Footprint Project)

'The Other' is a story of war and migration, told through magic realism. A young girl called Mana, and her living doll Manita, must walk from the violent Red and Yellow planet to the safe Blue planet. Her quest is a veneer of juvenile simplicity over a dark



### Gobsmacked (Underbelly Productions, Nic Doodson, Andrew Kay, Phil Bathols, TCB Group)

During last year's Fringe, Gobsmacked firmly established themselves as the a-cappella act to beat. This year they look set to retain that crown, presenting top-notch vocals alongside the work of world champion beat-boxer Ball-Zee to create a top class, well rounded show. While other a-cappella sets can feel stale, trudging from one song to the next with no innovation, Gobsmacked never fall into that trap. Short skits utilising the incredible talents of Ball-Zee link each piece, helping the show to become a slick, choreographed and almost theatrical hour. Everything is planned and executed perfectly - right down to creative use of live looping techniques. Undeniably, this show is a huge success.

Underbelly George Square, until 29 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

5/5



### Jayde Adams: 31 (Berk's Nest / PBH's Free Fringe / United Agents)

Strange things happen during Jayde Adams's show: there's competitive freestyle disco, smoothie making and an extremely unexpected musical number. This performance may be titled like an Adele album, but this highly personal show is no tribute act. This is a buckle-yourself-in hour, with Adams warmly taking the room from hysterical laughter to audience members offering her impromptu hugs. Autobiographical stand-up can be stale and self-indulgent, but Adams has a highly original voice and is unafraid to mix lowbrow, explicit anecdotes with the emotionally intimate. A truly generous entertainer, Adams deserves a long queue emptying their wallets into her bucket in exchange for her voiding her warm and funny heart.

Voodoo Rooms, until 28 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Francesca Peschier]

subtext of slavery and deprivation. This disturbing juxtaposition allows the play to mostly avoid the pitfalls of allegory, but it's Gaël Le Cornec's stellar performance that pulls it all together. She is completely absorbed by the role, using her multiple props and shadow puppets with effortless grace. This macabre fantasy does admirable work in highlighting how a child's mind should never have to encounter monsters.

Institut Français d'Ecosse, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Jane Berg]

### Save + Quit (Hairpin Productions)

Sometimes you only need an empty stage and two chairs to create a full city. Set in London and Dublin, 'Save + Quit' tells the stories of four people who could well be commuting with you in the morning. With a beautiful script by Sophia Chetin Leuner and incredibly natural, nuanced performances, the lives of these strangers become real on the simple stage. You'll get drawn into these stories of connections and missed opportunities, moments to "save" and moments to "quit", which somehow seem to encapsulate the experience of a generation. 'Save + Quit' is unexpectedly moving - a confident piece of theatre that reveals its characters' worlds to the audience through honest, high-rate storytelling.

Assembly George Square, until 29 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Aida Rocci]

### The Toyland Murders (Kite Tail Theatre Company)

'The Toyland Murders' is a classic New York noir thriller, as we see Inspector McGraw attempt to find the culprit in a series of increasingly grizzly murders. She interrogates the city's

most notorious, hardened criminals. Except...the characters are all puppets, all bright colours and huge button eyes. Suitable for children and adults, there are lots of toy-based jokes here, and it has real similarities to Jasper Fforde's 'Nursery Crime' novels. The puppeteers themselves are highly skilled, very expressive and animated, so that you're sometimes not sure whether to watch them or the puppets. 'The Toyland Murders' is a highly inventive and creative piece from this young company, with lots of laughs and clever parodies of noir film clichés.

Bedlam Theatre, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Gemma Scott]

### Wil Greenway: The Way The City Ate The Stars (NJC Productions)

Wil Greenway's solo show has sold out every night so far. And rightly so, as the Australian storyteller is back with the kind of uplifting yet heartbreaking show he does so well. It's about a woman he loves getting pregnant by someone else, but it also interweaves stories about birds fighting, old people grieving, fast cars and summer Christmases - small details building to an evocative, joyful whole. Though his charming manner can feel a little too rehearsed, Greenway has a sense of magical realism that means you'd happily listen to him telling the tallest of tall tales. He talks about blushing and flailing for words around a woman he likes, but Greenway's beautiful, lyrical script suggests he's someone who could never be lost for words.

Underbelly Med Quad, until 28 Aug | tw rating 4/5 | [Gemma Scott]

5/5



### E15 (LUNG)

Walking into LUNG's production of 'E15' is like walking into a political campaign. Colourful banners are everywhere, loud music plays while performers belt out slogans: "social housing, not social cleansing". 'E15' is a piece of documentary theatre about a protest movement, launched by 29 young mothers when they were threatened with eviction and relocation from their homes in Newham. It tells of their extraordinary response to an all-too common situation, interspersed with interviews about the housing crisis. This is theatre at its most politically engaged and engaging - it is a call to action, with reverberations well beyond the stage. The performers remind the audience that "these are real people," and encourage us to "do something". This outstanding company deliver an angry, empowering production, catalysing change.

Summerhall, until 27th Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Hannah Greenstreet]

5/5



Photo by Richard Lakos

### Adler & Gibb (Tim Crouch / Royal Court Theatre)

What makes a person? The memory that loved ones maintain? The testimony left in letters? The corpse buried in an unmarked grave? The image held by the public? Their art? Most importantly, who has a right to that identity? 'Adler & Gibb' asks these questions while bombarding the foundations of theatre and art. Highly theatrical and surprisingly gripping, the piece challenges the audience with its exploration of form and its visceral content. It is the story of Janet Adler, a famous artist who died mysteriously, and an actress who breaks into the artist's house hoping to unearth her past for an acting role. With a powerful script, compelling structure and knockout performances, 'Adler & Gibb' will not leave you indifferent.

Summerhall, until Aug 27 | tw rating 5/5 | [Aida Rocci]

### Dead Awaken (CalArts Festival Theatre)

A re-imagining of Henrik Ibsen's final play, 'Dead Awaken' is a loud, beautiful concert drama from The Californian Institute of the Arts. It focuses on The Artist, whose success has put a strain on his existence, as he struggles with the life he had and the life he thinks he wants. Looking at our animalistic qualities, the visuals are raw and compelling. The original music, composed by director Brian Carbine and lead actor Preston Butler III, is incredible, as the four performers tear through the intricate, poetic language accompanied by blasting music. An elusive but engaging tale, 'Dead Awaken' is a passionate and beautiful mash up of hip hop, neon-soul and equally beautiful, tender prose. A must see.

Venue 13, until 27 Aug | tw rating 5/5 | [Bethan Highgate-Betts]

5/5



### I, Who Have Hands More Innocent (Innes Wurth Presents)

For acclaimed Croatian poet Versa Parun (1922-2010) language was an "abiding and passionate intimacy". Her verse is profound existential nostalgia wrapped in raw intensity, selected here to show her coming of age as an artist and of Croatia in her youth. Reading the poetry, projected in English during the show, while hearing the gorgeous texture and cadence of the original language seemed to help reduce what is necessarily lost in translation. Vesna Matačić's delivery of this vocally and physically demanding role is remarkable, as is fact that the two artistic mediums augment one another so well. I can only thank the Innes Wurth Presents for introducing me to this incredible poet.

Zoo, until August 29 | tw rating 5/5 | [Jane Berg]

5/5



## Chris Cooke: The tricky task of defending free speech

**ThreeWeeks Editor Chris Cooke considers the challenges of defending free speech as he prepares to deliver his Free Speech at the Fringe once again.**

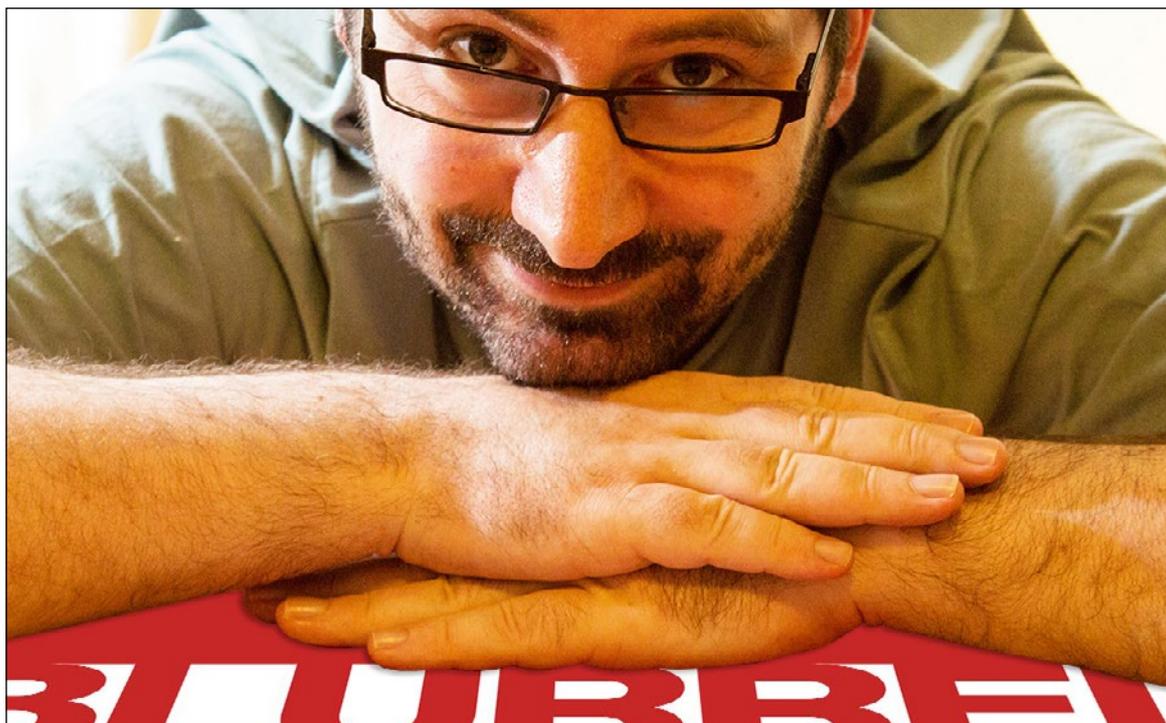
The principle of free speech under English law used to run something like this: you have the right to free speech except when you don't have the right to free speech. Which is helpful.

Things changed in 1998 with Tony Blair's Human Rights Act, which finally incorporated the European Convention On Human Rights into UK law. Of course, the UK had been obliged to protect those rights since ratifying the Convention in the 1950s, but - credit where it's due - Blair integrated them into the law of the land. And that included the right to 'freedom of expression' contained within Article Ten of the Convention.

Though even Article Ten provides some limitations of the right to free speech. For example, on the grounds of national security, territorial integrity or public safety. Or maybe to prevent disorder. Or some sort of crime. Or to protect health. Or morals, whatever that means. Or to protect reputations. Or to stop the spreading of secrets received in confidence. Or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

It's quite a wide list of exceptions which means that the principle of free speech today basically runs something like this: you have the right to free speech except when you don't have the right to free speech. Which is helpful.

Though, actually, it's often not the formal limitations placed on free speech by government and the law that have the most impact. Social conventions, norms and pressures also limit what we can say and where we can say it. Sometimes for the better.



Other times for the worse. And this is where it gets complicated.

As a journalist and a publisher, my default position is that free speech is both a fundamental human right and a crucial component of a functioning democracy, and my default opinion is that free speech is pretty much always worth defending, even beyond Article Ten. Which is basically code for "who the hell are you to tell me what to say?" Or, as Voltaire never said, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it".

But defending everyone's right to free speech can be tricky, because it means defending the free speech rights of idiots. And defending the rights of idiots is tiring and, at times, embarrassing. I've never worked for a tabloid newspaper, I'd never want to work for a tabloid newspaper and I don't avidly read any tabloid newspapers. Yet when your default opinion is that free speech is pretty much always worth defending, you find yourself climbing on a soap box to defend whatever idiotic thing some idiotic tabloid newspaper just said.

And then there is the OOFH Brigade. "Outrageous opinions for hire". Pretend journalists who have worked out that there's good money to be made by simply taking a contentious position on whatever the story of the day might be. And simply picking whatever viewpoint will rile at least 50% your audience saves you from having to do any actual research on which to viewpoint to take. Yet the OOFH Brigade is just exercising that right to freedom of expression, so I guess I'm obliged to defend this particular pack of idiots too, whenever there is a chorus of "boycott!", "sack them!" and "resign!" over whatever idiotic thing they just said.

And then, of course, there are the trolls, internet code for bullies. This is where it gets particularly tricky, because

while I don't believe people have the automatic right to not be offended, they clearly have the automatic right not to be bullied. So if someone uses their free speech right to offend, fair game. But if someone uses their free speech right to bully, OK, game over. But who decides when the offending becomes bullying?

My point is this. Defending free speech can be a challenge, yet it's a challenge I am usually willing to tackle, in defence of my default position, that free speech is both a fundamental human right and a crucial component of a functioning democracy. So how come, in 2014, I started arguing that British radio should have banned the pop song 'Blurred Lines'?

That's the contradiction I explore in my free speech on free speech,

which I first performed here at the Fringe last year, and which I will be delivering once again later this week, in part so I can record it for a podcast. In it I explain in more detail what the law actually says about freedom of expression, and I discuss what I consider to be the top five free speech controversies: privacy, protest, offence, belief and the bullies. I'll then endeavour to explain why, when it comes to a pop song written by Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams, my default position falls down.

It would be great if you could join me. You can book free tickets from [chriscookesreespeech.com](http://chriscookesreespeech.com).

Chris Cooke's Free Speech is being performed at theSpace @ Symposium Hall on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 Aug at 10.30am.

Read more columns from Fringe performers online, including from:

**Rory O'Keeffe**  
**Guy Masterson**  
**Sean Kempton**  
**Afsaneh Gray**  
**Chris Stokes**  
**Bob Slayer**  
**Shazia Mirza**  
**Luke Courtier**  
**Alison Thea-Skot**  
**Danielle Ward**  
**Henry Maynard**  
**Brendon Burns**  
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**Edinburgh.com/**  
**columns**

## Rainbow Class

written and performed by Vivienne Acheampong

★★★★★  
"One of the best things I saw at Edinburgh" *West End Wilma*

★★★★★  
"We're reduced to helpless laughter" *Bouquets & Brickbats*

★★★★★  
"A comic tour de force" *The Stage*

Part of The Guardian's "Three To See" at Edinburgh Fringe

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Photo by  
Steve Ullathorne



## Jarlath Regan: You'll never guess who was at the show last night...

So, have you been doing any celebrity spotting while wandering around the Festival this year? Trying your best to look all nonchalant as you realise there's a star standing in front of you in the queue for the Cow, or busy entertaining the table next to yours in the Courtyard, or possibly sitting in the front row expecting to be entertained by your show.

After comedian Jarlath Regan told us his 'Paxman story', we asked him to go and find some similar tales of mid-show celebrity encounters from other comedians...

When Hugh Grant tried to attend Eddie Pepitone's show at the Festival that time, the storm of publicity it created was the turning point in the American comedian's sell-out run.

But the reality of having an A-list celebrity attend your show can go one of two ways. If the performance goes well, the endorsement from a well-known name can help a comic immeasurably. But if things go spectacularly badly, having a famous person in attendance can only make matters worse.

My mid-show celebrity encounter involved a certain TV presenter and news man. I didn't know why the room had gone silent. I had just done a joke about Jeremy Paxman that usually works. Then I saw his HUGE face staring back at me from the third row. He's a terrifying man when he gives you that disapproving look and his head is as big as a pumpkin. I still get a shiver up my spine when I see him do that look on TV.

This got me thinking, what on-stage celebrity encounters do other stand-ups most remember...



**Comedian:** Bec Hill  
**Celebrity:** Pete Doherty

"I did a gig to eight people once and Pete Doherty happened to be one of them. I'd like to think he heard about my whimsy and specifically came to see me, but I think he just rocked up to see what the noise was. I really couldn't tell if he enjoyed it or not. That's the thing with people who always look high and confused. It's very hard to read how happy you're making them!"

**Comedian:** Romesh Ranganathan  
**Celebrity:** The Kaiser Chiefs

"I was doing a bit of stand up about Man City football club and it completely died on its arse in front of the band the Kaiser Chiefs. After the show, they couldn't even look me in the eye. Horrible."



**Comedian:** Luke Benson  
**Celebrity:** Cheryl Baker

"I was once introduced by Cheryl Baker. She told the harrowing foundation story of her Newcastle-based charity for head injuries and coma victims and then, as if part of the same sentence, she

said 'also from Newcastle here's your comedian Luke Benson'. It went alright but I can't hear 'Making Your Mind Up' without shuddering".

**Comedian:** Blind Boy Boat Club - The Rubber Bandits  
**Celebrity:** James Murphy (LCD Sound System)

"James Murphy from LCD Sound System came to see us and a drunken fan jumped on his back and started shouting 'you're losing your edge' before being pulled off him. And bizarrely David Lee Roth once called in to a New York radio show requesting one of our prank calls."

**Comedian:** Damian Clark  
**Celebrity:** Charlotte Church

"I wish I could say it was horrendous but she was lovely and thanks to her extra lung capacity, her laughs were louder than everyone else's!"



**Comedian:** Trevor Browne  
**Celebrity:** Name Withheld (A Scottish Politician)

"I had a politician - I am afraid to say who - come to my show and during it she was writing constantly. After the gig she came up and handed me a letter which was a play-by-play critique of the show and how much she hated me. The letter read hilariously as it was being written during the show in present tense, so it had quotes like 'I've never witnessed such misogyny', 'God I hate this tripe', and 'You are bursting out of that jacket'."

**Comedian:** Tony Law  
**Celebrity:** Jeremy Clarkson

"He just stared me down for an hour".



Jarlath Regan - Arseways is on at Just The Tonic at The Tron until 28 Aug.

## Recipe Corner: A pick-me-up soup from JoJo Bellini

As we approach the final furlong of Festival 2016, your bodies may well be in need of a detox, after nearly three weeks of late nights, cramped venues and all the crepes, pizzas, chips and cheese that the Fringe food vendors have on offer.

But we're here to help. Well, specifically kitchen cook and cabaret artist JoJo Bellini is here to help, with a recipe that will stave off your inevitable lurgy via a quick vegetarian meal that is not only delicious, but also filled with all the vitamins and minerals we need to boost our immune system to ward off the bugs!

I cook a divine Leek & Broccoli Soup as a part of my show. Nothing could be simpler or more satisfying than a good home-made soup.

potatoes, two litres of Water, the Knorr vege pod and the broccoli.

This is not only nutritious, filled with vitamins, minerals, iron and fabulousness, but can also be frozen for a late night microwave zap throughout the Festival, when the prosecco has been flowing all night and you forget to have dinner. It is a great pick me up and will keep you going for the rest of the Fringe. Trust me, I never wake up with a hangover!

2. Set to boil.

3. While the heat is going up, chop up your onion and your leek.

4. Put some butter or margarine in a frying pan. Pop in the leek and onion and sauté. Then add your cabbage and leek mix, Cajun spice, salt and pepper to taste in the pan.

5. Cook for the length of 'Burning Down The House'. Approximately five minutes.

I whip this one up in less than half an hour every day of Fringe whilst singing Tom Jones songs and there is very little prep needed!

6. Add all the ingredients in the pan to the pot. Give it a good stir and cook on high for approximately ten minutes, being careful not to let the soup boil over.

**You need:**  
2 litres of water  
1 x tinned potatoes  
4 x packets of broccoli florets  
1 x red onion  
1 x leek  
1 x leek and cabbage mix  
1 x Knorr vege pod  
Butter (or margarine to make it vegan)  
Cajun spice, salt and pepper to taste

7. Now for the fun part. Get out your hand blender, pop on Tom Jones' 'Thunderball' and give it a good hearty blend. And Voila! You have a delicious flu fighting meal ready to go for around ten to 20 people (or five very hungry flat mates).

**Method:**  
1. In a large pot, put in the tinned

'JoJo Bellini's Kitchen Cabaret' is on at Stand Comedy Club 2 until 28 Aug.

Photo by  
Mark Dawson



# 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

cultural extravaganza each August, interviewing performers, directors and producers, commissioning guest columns, and reporting on key events in the Festival City.

**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.

**THE THREEWEEKS WEEKLY MAGAZINE:** The ThreeWeeks Weekly Magazine is our flagship publication, a full-colour tabloid-sized magazine, published weekly during August and packed with reviews, interviews and exclusive columns. You can pick up your free copy of ThreeWeeks from all the key venues at the Edinburgh Festival and numerous other places across the city as well.

**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](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup)

**THE THREEWEEKS WEBSITE:** In addition to the magazine and

daily email, there is the ThreeWeeks website at [threeweeksedinburgh.com](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com). All of our news, reviews, previews, interviews and columns appear there too, plus you can search content by genre, by venue or by year.

**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](http://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](http://thisweeklondon.com).

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Printed by  
Mortons Print Limited

Distribution by  
Door To Door Delivery

Published by UnLimited Media, part of 3CM UnLimited [unlimitedmedia.co.uk](http://unlimitedmedia.co.uk)

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# CtheFestival



★★★★★  
Independent

Gavin Ling (Australia)  
**Committed to Mediocrity**  
3-29 Aug 19.30 C nova



The Latymer Theatre Company  
**Big the Musical**  
21-28 Aug 12.00 C



★★★★★  
The Stage

The So and So Arts Club  
**The Marvellous Adventures of Mary Seacole**  
3-29 Aug 18.10 C nova



★★★★★  
BroadwayBaby

Atticist  
**Life According to Saki**  
3-29 Aug 14.15 C



Asleik & Jon (Norway)  
**Aladdin and His Magical Europe Refugee Tour 2016**  
3-29 Aug 17.30 C nova



Under Two Floorboards  
**Is it Tabu?**  
4-29 Aug 19.45 C south



The Oxford Gargoyles  
**The Oxford Gargoyles: Jazz A Cappella**  
15-29 Aug 15.30 C



Cobbles & Rhyme Productions  
**[Title of Show]**  
3-29 Aug 21:20 C cubed



★★★★★  
The Gay Times

EM-Lou Productions  
**5 Guys Chillin'**  
4-29 Aug 23.00 C too



Spasm  
**Grey Matter**  
21-29 Aug 13.00 C nova



★★★★★  
EdinburghGuide.com

ACJ Productions  
**Tomorrow Maybe**  
3-29 Aug 15.15 C nova



Bear Pit Theatre  
**All Might Seem Good**  
21-28 Aug 12.00 C

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