

# ThreeWeeks



**Celebrate 70 years of  
the Edinburgh Festival  
with the cast of  
Whose Line Is It Anyway?**



**PLUS WE TALK TO**  
**Sunil Patel | Francesco de Carlo**  
**Matt Abbot | Caroline Mabey**  
**Helen Norton & Jonathan White**  
**Rebecca Johannsen**

**ALSO INSIDE: 75 SHOW  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

**it's your free guide to  
Edinburgh Festival 2017**

'SPECTACULAR AND JAW-DROPPING!'

The List  
'Top 25 Shows'

CHINA  
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ASSEMBLY HALL

MOUND PLACE

# HELLO THERE

## The Edinburgh Festival is BIG.

It's a three week party of theatre, comedy, cabaret, music, musicals, dance, opera, wordplay and more.

We navigate it all so you don't have to.

We have two decades experience covering Edinburgh's festivals.

We have a team of great reviewers on the ground.

We'll do the hard work and let you know what to see.

ThreeWeeks in three steps...

**1** **THREE TO SEE** show recommendations - in this magazine and every day of the festival at [threeweeksedinburgh.com](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com)

**2** **THREEWEEKS REVIEWS** every day of the festival - sign up to the TW Daily bulletin at [threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com/signup)

**3** **INTERVIEWS GALORE** - read them in this magazine and online - plus sign up to the TW:TALKS podcast at [thisweektalks.com](http://thisweektalks.com)

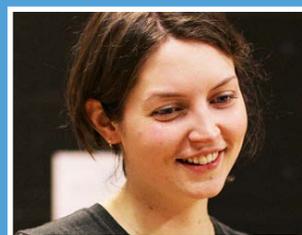
### MEET THESE PERFORMERS INSIDE THIS MAGAZINE



READ OUR INTERVIEWS FROM PAGES 5 - 12

CHECK OUT OUR THREE TO SEE SHOW RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PAGES 13 - 18

### MEET THESE PERFORMERS ONLINE



READ MORE INTERVIEWS ONLINE AT [THREEWEEKSEDINBURGH.COM/INTERVIEWS](http://THREEWEEKSEDINBURGH.COM/INTERVIEWS)

# Taiwan Season 2017

In 2017 the Taiwan Season returns to the Edinburgh Fringe for a fourth consecutive year with some of the best live performances being made on the island today. Drawn from an open call to practitioners of all art forms in Taiwan, and carefully curated by the key Fringe venues Dance Base and Summerhall, the season embraces dance, theatre and puppetry via a handful of engaging and uniquely individual shows:

In **The Backyard Story** clothes that competitive neighbours have hung out to dry magically come alive.

**Ever Never** charts with sensitivity and wit the parallel journeys of five strangers whose lives are up in the air.

**Heart of Darkness** is a vivid exploration of the complex and secret inner life of a forgotten woman.

In **Together Alone** the tensions and pleasures that pass between two people are laid bare.

The dynamic all-female dance **038** asks what home might mean in an increasingly fast and anxious modern world.

Colourful, vital, playful, dramatic...the Taiwan Season is all this and more. The programme is produced and managed collaboratively by **Tai He Arts Production LTD**, Taiwan and **Step Out Arts**, UK and funded by the Ministry of Culture, Taiwan.



## The Backyard Story

**Puppet Beings Theatre**  
Venue 26 Summerhall  
Red Lecture Theatre  
Time: 11.45am (50 mins)  
August 2, 3 £6  
August 4-6, 8-13, 15-20, 22-27 £10  
Box office 0131 560 1581

## Ever Never

**Co-coism**  
Venue 26 Summerhall  
Cairns Lecture Theatre  
Time: 16.25 (60 mins)  
August 2 £8  
August 4-6, 8-13, 15-20, 22-27 £12 (£10)  
Box office 0131 560 1581

## Heart of Darkness

**Sun Son Theatre**  
Venue 26 Summerhall  
Cairns Lecture Theatre  
Time 15.15 (40 mins)  
August 2, 3 £6  
August 4-6, 11-13, 18-20, 25-27 £12 (£10)  
August 8-10, 15-17, 22-24 £10 (£8)  
Box office 0131 560 1581

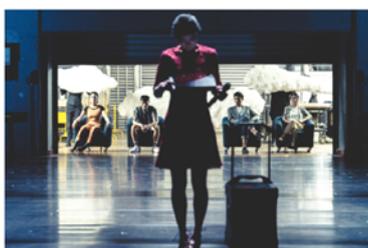
## Together Alone

**Chen-Wei Lee x ART B&B**  
Venue 22 Dance Base  
Time 21.45 (45 mins)  
August 4-6 £10 (£8)  
August 8 & 9, 11-13, 15 & 16,  
18-20, 22 & 23, 25-27 £12 (£10)  
Box office: 0131 225 5525

## 038

**Kuo-Shin Chuang Pangcah Dance Theatre**  
Venue 22 Dance Base  
Time 15.15 (40 mins)  
August 4-6 £10 (£8)  
August 8-13, 15-20, 22-27 £12 (£10)  
Box office: 0131 225 5525

## Summerhall



Summerhall favourites **Puppet Beings Theatre** summon up the innocence of childhood and inject fresh vitality into children's theatre. In **The Backyard Story** a red balloon breathes life into clothes that have been hung out to dry by competitive neighbours. Let your imagination run free as jackets, shirts, dresses and trousers make friends and form relationships, reflecting those between parents, children and others. Combining contemporary and traditional puppet arts, the company invite audiences of all ages to exert their imaginations. When you get home, can you make your clothes come to life like these?

**Ever Never** is a semi-autobiographical performance rooted in the personal journey of **Co-coism** director **Chien-Han Hung**. Deeply affected by her father's death and living away from home, on her travels she found the aircraft cabin a mysterious space where the past could be intercepted and fragments of forgotten memories were rekindled and brought to life. Also drawing upon the experiences of playwright **Chi-Chun Feng** and the production's creative team, in **Ever Never** the airport and aeroplane become places out of time for five strangers. Up in the air past and present collide and coalesce into delicate and heart-felt physical theatre.

In **Heart of Darkness** the Taipei-based **Sun Son Theatre** fuses a variety of theatrical elements – including bold physicality and feelings, evocative instrumentation and vocals – to explore the inner self. The performance was inspired by choreographer **Pei-Fen Low's** grandmother, and the notion of human existence gradually gnawed by time. The performance features long hair, symbolic objects, dance, music and ritualistic imagery as a means of emotionally examining a woman's journey through life – her hidden aspirations, expectations, ambitions and fears. It asks if the paths we choose are irreversible, and attempts to understand those women who are slowly forgotten...

How do we live together? Relationships are complicated, and sometimes beyond words. In **Together Alone** two (naked) dance artists **Chen-Wei Lee** and **Zoltán Vakulya** combine their different approaches to movement to explore the tensions, pleasures, sorrows and reconciliations of two individuals attempting to discover harmony. This honest, brave and unpretentious duet uses body and mind to reveal a core of intimate feeling.

Titled after the area code for Hualien on Taiwan's east coast, home of the indigenous Pangcah people, **038** asks: 'Where is home? What is home?' Is it the ease we feel, seeing pictures on the projector screen and hearing tribal songs on the stereo? Or is it in the seemingly endless march of modernity? Contemporary but underpinned by traditional spirit, this production by **Kuo-Shin Chuang Pangcah Dance Theatre** reflects the anxieties and uncertainties of coming home in search of ourselves and our roots.



taiwansession2017



# INTERVIEWS

## ThreeWeeks editors Chris Cooke and Caro Moses chat to some of our favourite Fringe performers

Photo by  
Rob Grieg



CHRIS MEETS | COMEDY INTERVIEW

### Sunil Patel: Titan

Between 2011 and 2013, Sunil Patel won or came close to winning practically every new comedian competition in existence, and has deservedly won much critical acclaim away from the world of contests as well.

To this year's Edinburgh, he brings his second hour long show 'Titan', in which he broaches the topic of how, in an increasingly depressing world, he is actually doing okay.

I spoke to him to find out more, about his career, this year's show, and those aforementioned new talent competitions.

**CC: So let's start at the very start, how did you first get into this comedy lark?**

SP: I had a comedian as a housemate and I thought I'd give it go. Boring, right? Could spice it up a bit? How about: Patel emerged, fully formed, not born of common flesh and blood, but of light and steel, with a cracking five minute set at an open mic night above a pub on The Strand.

**CC: You seem to have won or got to the final of pretty much every single new comedian competition. Do you get a prize for entering every single one?**

SP: I wish I did. Total prize earnings of zero pounds, unfortunately. The upside is that I get to lord it over my friends which is priceless. Actually, I do have a couple of trophies that I clutch as I sleep.

**CC: Would you like to piss off all the important media and bookers behind those new talent awards by picking a favourite?**

SP: Better than that mate, I'll rank the fuckers...  
1. Reading NAOTY. The 2011 winner was particularly impressive. Winner / finalists since then are talentless swine. Google and avoid them if you can.

2. Piccadilly NCOTY. Got a hefty trophy out of this one and it was a short tube ride home.  
3. BBC NCA. One night in a five star hotel in Blackpool AND a trophy. All paid for by your licence fee.  
4. The rest.

**CC: You're bringing a brand new show to the Fringe. What can we expect from it?**

SP: Fireworks, lots of audio visual elements, many, many dogs and too much empty boasting.

**CC: Your show blurb says that you can find laughs in the bleakest of topics. Given recent world events, does that mean you've been laughing a lot of late?**

SP: Everyone's banging on about 'recent world events' like it's the end of days and - do you know what? - I don't think it's that bad. It's not the end of the world. It's a bit weird, but we'll be alright. On the other hand, I am concerned about the precarious trade situation re the EU - basically will we still get the cheese? They do very good cheese. And frankfurters, I like them.

**CC: Your show blurb also mentions that robots might take over the world. What are the chances of this happening in mid-August? Could a robot keep a Free Festival audience engaged in a mid-afternoon slot at the Counting House?**

SP: Yeah I forgot about this. I was thinking a lot about our future robot overlords when that blurb was written, but now I'm not so keen on it. There's every chance they could take over the world by mid-August, that's the thing about those sneaky robots, they could be up to anything and you wouldn't know it. Mind you, I think comedians are safe because no robot has shown the slightest interest in doing an Edinburgh show yet. Also, I hear what you're saying about the difficult mid-afternoon Counting House slot, but until it's fully air-conditioned they're in the same boat as me.

**CC: Ah yes, you're doing your show in the Free Festival. How annoying would it be if I asked you a predictable question about why you've decided to do**

**a show in the Fringe's free show strand?**

SP: Please go ahead, I will as always give a straightforward and honest answer.

**CC: Why have you decided to do a show in the Fringe's free show strand?**

SP: Because I'm Che fucking Guevara.

**CC: Tell us more about the telly show. The one you're in, I mean.**

SP: 'Borderline?' Yeah it's really fun. I play a baggage handler which is actually quite tough because I have very soft hands and weak arms. How do I manage it? By acting. Also 'Bobby And Harriet Get Married' starts on Viceland in August. I don't really remember what I said in it but I have a nagging feeling I did not come across well.

**CC: Tell us more about the podcast. The one you're in, I mean.**

SP: 'Why Is Harriet Crying' started as a way of mocking my friend Harriet Kemsley - of the aforementioned Viceland TV series - and her propensity to be tearful over the most minor things, but has now turned into a monstrous juggernaut. I enjoy making it, but it worries me that Harriet has to constantly find things to cry about, and we're now at the point she will probably cry about having to cry. I think our listenership enjoy this.

**CC: Doing a full Fringe run is famously hard work. How are you preparing?**

SP: I did a couple of sit-ups today and I will also buy an umbrella.

**CC: And finally, what are your top tips for anyone entering a new comedian competition this Fringe?**

SP: Be kind to each other, it is all we have. Failing that, remember there is no point doing anything unless you crush everyone and everything in your path. Be like the shark, a bloodthirsty monster zoning in on what it wants and not stopping until the flesh is ripping in it's teeth and the whole world is a deep cloudy red.

Sunil Patel performs 'Titan' at Laughing Horse @ The Counting House from 3-27 Aug.

## Three Weeks Quick Quiz: Edinburgh Festival nostalgia special

This August the Edinburgh Festival celebrates its 70th anniversary.

To mark the occasion, we have asked a plethora of performers about their personal Fringe experiences.

Look out for their answers every day of the festival online and in the TW Daily.

To kick us off, the cast of the iconic improv show 'Whose Line Is It Anyway?' get all nostalgic as they return to the Edinburgh stage once again.

### CLIVE ANDERSON



**TW: What was your first ever experience of the Edinburgh Fringe?**

CA: I first went to Edinburgh in 1974, which I now realise is closer in time to the Festival and Fringe starting in 1947 than it is to today.

Anyway, I was in a university revue. In previous years, to make ends meet, actors from Cambridge had performed in serious dramas - Shakespeare or 'Aristophanes' in the original Greek, that sort of thing - as well as being in the Footlights. But in 1973 they had lost a lot of money and the whole thing was cancelled for the following year. But then, at the last minute, we signed up to do just the Footlights show, which was a lot easier to do and to sell on its own.

We'd been performing that year's revue since June anyway. We'd had something of a roller-coaster ride - even performing in London's West End and on TV - both more or less disastrously - but in Edinburgh we had a great time. I think we got plenty of laughs. My memories, though, are mainly of merry-making off stage.

**TW: What's the best thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe?**

CA: About ten years ago I saw a Canadian actor called Raoul Bhaneja perform a one-man 'Hamlet'. The words Shakespeare, Canadian and one-man might not attract everybody. But if it wasn't the best thing I have ever seen on the Fringe, it was certainly the best way to see 'Hamlet'.

**TW: What's the worst thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe - so bad it was good?**

CA: I have seen a few ropey things, but I get too embarrassed for the performers to find things so bad they are good. Especially if you are in a sparsely filled room where everybody can hear you scream.

**TW: Which of the Fringe shows you performed in do you most fondly remember - and why?**

CA: A few years ago I hosted an AIDS benefit late night at the Playhouse. It was quite a raucous, funny show ending about two or three in the morning.

The organisers said they wanted us to do a bit right at the end of the show where we read out some of the

names that had been stitched on to a memorial quilt, commemorating people who had died of AIDS. The quilt was already a huge world-wide project and I couldn't see how this would work. How meaningful could it be to read out just a dozen or so names from the many thousands on the quilt? This would not impress anyone.

How wrong I was. By the end of a benefit show the good cause can be all but forgotten in the excitement, but this brought the focus back to the point of the whole night. Laughter did turn to tears. It was an extraordinarily emotional experience, all the more so because I had been so doubtful as to how it was to work.

**TW: Name a Fringe performer - past or present - who you'd love to see participating in 'Whose Line?'**

CA: I think Robin Williams did take part in the American version of 'Whose Line?' on TV a few years ago. But it would have been great to have him performing with us here on stage. Actually, it would have been great just to have him with us at all.

**TW: Other than performing and seeing shows, what is your favourite thing to do in Edinburgh during August?**

CA: A number of old friends of mine and their more or less grown up children are often in Edinburgh at the same time during the Festival, and we can usually manage to get together for a huge reunion lunch. Hard to beat.

### JOSIE LAWRENCE

**TW: What was your first ever experience of the Edinburgh Fringe?**

JL: Well, my first experience must have been around 1985. I was directing a Denise Black and the Cray Sisters show. The Comedy Store Players were up there and Paul Merton had a cold, so they asked me if I would step in, and that's how I started performing with them. If I hadn't have gone up there that year, things might have been very different. My first improv game of Emotions was with Mike Myers. It went really well! Mike said it was a "fine debut".

**TW: What's the best thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe?**

JL: I directed the fabulous Linda Marlowe in her one-woman show



'Berkoff's Women' at the Assembly Rooms in the late 90s. She'd been a long time collaborator with Steven Berkoff and had collated all his female characters and put them into one show. She won awards and still performs it to this day, along with about six other one-women shows. She's an inspiration to all actors.

**TW: What's the worst thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe - so bad it was good?**

JL: I happened to walk into a late-night show one evening. I can't remember the title of it, or who was performing it, but it was a one-man show and he seemed to just be very angry that there were only five of us in the audience. I have a vague memory of him talking at one point about his kidneys and his liver, but the rest is a blur.

**TW: Which of the Fringe shows you performed in do you most fondly remember - and why?**

JL: I think it's got to be the first time that I properly went up to perform with the Comedy Store Players at the Assembly Rooms. We all shared a flat together. I think there was only one other improv show that year and 'Whose Line Is It Anyway?' had taken off as well. We just had the most amazing audiences and great fun on and off the stage. Acting-wise, the one I most fondly remember is 'Picasso's Women'.

**TW: Name a Fringe performer - past or present - who you'd love to see participating in 'Whose Line?'**

JL: I think he's such a stalwart in Edinburgh and so loved, that it would be lovely to see Arthur Smith join us. To me, he's everything. A funny man, a poet, and a fantastic teller of stories.

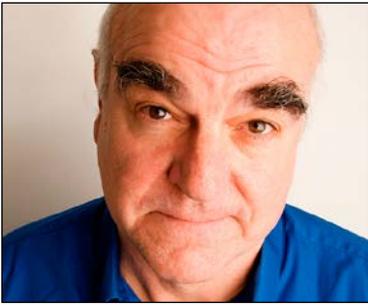
**TW: Other than performing and seeing shows, what is your favourite thing to do in Edinburgh during August?**

JL: To be honest, I'm not a fan of crowds, which seems silly when I'm talking about the festival because it gets so crowded! It's always lovely when you find that little quiet oasis somewhere and you can just sit and have a drink and watch the world go by.

### STEPHEN FROST

**TW: What was your first ever experience of the Edinburgh Fringe?**

SF: I was sixteen and on holiday with my Scottish girlfriend in Edinburgh. I'd never heard of the Festival. I was a budding playwright and actor at the time, so I just went Billy bonkers. I just walked around and went into any venue, sat down and watched what was on. I saw five plays in one day. I've never done that since. One was 'Under Milk Wood' and another was 'Tartuffe' starring Windsor Davies from the 70s



TV show 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum'. I was hooked.

**TW: What's the best thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe?**

SF: Windsor Davies in 'Tartuffe'. He was hilarious, but his moustache was funnier.

**TW: What's the worst thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe - so bad it was good?**

SF: When American stand-up Eric Bagosian's show was invaded by the late Malcolm Hardee on a dumper truck. Best thing in the show.

**TW: Which of the Fringe shows you performed in do you most fondly remember - and why?**

SF: I was in something called 'The Wow Show', an anarchic anti-theatre show. At the end we invaded the theatre dressed as the ALF - the Audience Liberation Front - and we were all called Alf. We liberated the audience, herded them out onto the street shouting "run free, you don't have to watch theatre", and then jumped onto the back of a scaffolding truck which didn't stop until Portobello!

**TW: Name a Fringe performer - past or present - who you'd love to see participating in 'Whose Line?'**

SF: I'd like to see Greg Proops on stage. I think he's got potential.

**TW: Other than performing and seeing shows, what is your favourite thing to do in Edinburgh during August?**

SF: There are some very nice pubs in Edinburgh you know (licking lips and stroking chin).

## MIKE MCSHANE

**TW: What was your first ever experience of the Edinburgh Fringe?**

MM: In 1992, Jim Sweeney, Steve Steen and I used the festival as our launch pad to go on a UK tour, produced by Nica Burns. And I learned that when you are on stage with Jim and Steve, you basically just get out of the way until you see an opening.

During a Raymond Chandler improv, we asked the audience for a physical trait for a character and got "enormous testicles". I was the detective and Steve walked in as a

butler. He said "I'll get the Colonel!" and went off stage. I vamped, describing the location, and people are laughing, so at first I'm like, "yeah this is going good". Then I realised that the laughs were being generated behind me, as Steve walked in backwards, physically and audibly miming a wheelbarrow laden with some enormous mass.

After a beat or two, Jim follows behind at a perfect stage angle, miming his enormous plums. I just stood there in amazement and admiration while the audience lost their minds. I tried to start the scene, but as I interrogated Jim, Steve started soaping and tenderly washing the imaginary goolies, and, well, I was done. These guys were, and are still, the deepest and best of mates - they grew up together and I was so fortunate that they took me on as their large American gooseberry.

**TW: What's the best thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe?**

MM: Chris Lynam with a Roman candle in his arse gleefully saluting the audience like Jimmy Cagney while his band plays 'There's No Business Like Show Business'. And... John Hegley, warmly and intimately reading his poetry, with all of us then being offered instruments and just knocking around on stage with him. Both were the best things about being a theatre performer and giving your audience a particular kind of experience. The scale of technique is so wide, but the spirit can be so precise. Beautiful.



**TW: What's the worst thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe - so bad it was good?**

MM: A very prim lady-like producer drunk off her ass at 3 am, ramming down an order of chips under a street light, seeing me and some friends and turning around to scarper, and running into the street light pole. I gave it five stars, but I think she saw more. And no, it wasn't David Johnson.

**TW: Which of the Fringe shows you performed in do you most fondly remember - and why?**

MM: I returned in 2004 with Dave Calvitto and Nancy Walsh in a play written by John Clancy called 'Fatboy'. It was a modern language version of Alfred Jarry's 'Ubu Roi', and it rocked the house. The company was amazing. Nancy was, under any circumstance, a genius performer, and she was doing the show with a part of her brain cut out from cancer. We'd finish the show, and it just felt so good to be in the

Clancy's embrace with such a talented company. The play that I am doing this year, 'Mary Go Nowhere', has the same feel. Ah, the old Assembly Rooms and Smilin' Bill, the master producer and photographer.

**TW: Name a Fringe performer - past or present - who you'd love to see participating in 'Whose Line?'**

MM: Dave Calvitto. Really, the guy has a style and a mind that's unique. Like a cheeky low key meerkat. He improvises with Alan Alda, for Christ's sake. I think he can handle us. You should check out his play, 'Enterprise', this year.

**TW: Other than performing and seeing shows, what is your favourite thing to do in Edinburgh during August?**

MM: Walking it late at night, lightly twinkly after an evening with old friends. Or thrift store shopping in Morningside with a stomach full of cake. You've got the museums after that, a whisky near Tollcross, then some galleries and walking along the different battle walls that have come and gone, reminding you how important walls were to medieval minds. I'll leave it there.

## COLIN MOCHRIE

**TW: What was your first ever experience of the Edinburgh Fringe?**

CM: My first experience in the Fringe was performing with Steve Frost, Steve Steen, Andy Smart, Jim Sweeney and Richard Vbranch around 1998. Except for the fact that we kept smacking our heads into the lights that were hanging from the low ceiling (except for Steen), it went beautifully. As I recall, I was exceptionally funny.

**TW: What's the best thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe?**

CM: I could not possibly pick one show. Over the years I have been at the Fringe I've been amazed at musicals, dance pieces, stand-up, sketch, improv. So let's get back to me. The best thing I ever performed was Kenneth Williams as a dinosaur.

**TW: What's the worst thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe - so bad it was good?**

CM: It wasn't officially a Fringe show, but there was a street performer performing Beatles songs and I am



fairly certain that English was not his first language. Either that or I have previously totally misheard 'The Tong And Winding Rote'.

**TW: Which of the Fringe shows you performed in do you most fondly remember - and why?**

CM: The first one with the guys. It introduced me to the Fringe, the city, ten hour poker games and liver abuse.

**TW: Name a Fringe performer - past or present - who you'd love to see participating in 'Whose Line?'**

CM: John Cleese. I think he'd be great because... he's John Cleese.

**TW: Other than performing and seeing shows, what is your favourite thing to do in Edinburgh during August?**

CM: Catching up with the friends I've made over the years, meeting the new talent, and to just sit and stare at the castle. In my city, we have a sign celebrating the first air mail letter delivered. Not quite the same.

## GREG PROOPS

**TW: What was your first ever experience of the Edinburgh Fringe?**

GP: My first year performing was 1993. I did a midnight show at the Assembly Rooms. The Doug Anthony All-Stars played upstairs and stomped and made a lot of noise. Things were falling off the ceiling in my venue. One night the dam broke and I took my crowd of 99 people upstairs and invaded their theatre, stamping and shouting "We hate the Doug Ants!" They were, of course stunned, then delighted, and then we all sang 'Your Cheating Heart' together. Tears of joy.

**TW: What's the best thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe?**

GP: Steven Berkoff in several plays, including his adaptation of Poe's 'Tell-Tale Heart' performed without a set. Magisterial. Absolutely riveting. His utter command of the stage, his rare sense of humour, his broad, unique style. The drawing out of words and emphasis on sounds. An absolute Master. We also ate hot dogs together at a cook-out on Calton Hill.

**TW: What's the worst thing you've ever seen performed at the Fringe - so bad it was good?**

GP: Bob the cab driver, who is now passed, drove a white black cab that had fairy lights, a plaid quilt and dolls in the back window. He would blast bagpipe music at top volume and never, ever look at the road. One drunken night with the legendary Malcolm Hardee, I decided to take a ride with Bob. Malcolm had his number and he picked us up at a pub near the Pleasance.

Bob had some glowing necklace



he was fussing with endlessly, with Malcolm in the backseat interjecting, "in your own time, Bob" a thousand times. Bob wasn't speaking with his wife at the time and was taking his meals in the cab. At last we took off and were driving up Arthur's Seat on the wrong side of the road, cars swerving in the foggy dark to miss us. Malcolm piping up in his deadpan, "mind the road, Bob". Bob nattering at us in his indecipherable brogue whilst blasting the pipes.

I always looked for his cab. I miss Bob. He was Edinburgh. And I miss Malcolm, he once got high with me backstage at the Balloon and tried to put on a bear outfit over his suit.

**TW: Which of the Fringe shows you performed in do you most fondly remember - and why?**

GP: The venerated comedy duo Jim Sweeney and Steve Steen's 30th anniversary show at the Gilded Balloon. Zillions of comics, the ageless Barry Cryer got up and slayed backstage and onstage. Then we all got up and roasted Sweeney and Steen. It was so glorious, Karen Koren treated us to champagne. My wife and I stayed at The Scotsman and we saw Muriel Sparks in the lobby. It does not get more Scottish than that.

**TW: Name a Fringe performer - past or present - who you'd love to see participating in 'Whose Line?'**

GP: Colin Mochrie. I've performed on 'Whose Line' with him for 28 years, Edinburgh three years ago, the West End in London the last two years and countless gigs on the road. But is he really all there?

**TW: Other than performing and seeing shows, what is your favourite thing to do in Edinburgh during August?**

GP: Dining with my wife. Lunch at Valvona & Corolla. The best fixed price lunch in the universe at the Grain Store. Walking up to the Acropolis on Calton Hill. The Whisky Bar on the West Bow. Shellfish at Ondine. Art at the Scottish National Gallery. Smoking pot on the balcony of the Tower Restaurant. Not going to the Tattoo. Walking down Princes Street gazing at the torches from the Castle at night. Fish and chips and a bottle of wine from L'Alba D'Oro.

'Whose Line Is It Anyway?' - Live At The Fringe' is on at Assembly Rooms from 3-27 Aug.

# Francesco de Carlo: Comfort Zone

Photo by  
Snej Shandarinova



### CHRIS MEETS | COMEDY INTERVIEW

**It's been a while since we last saw Italian comedian Francesco De Carlo performing in the Scottish capital, specifically when he delivered his first solo show in English back in 2014. Our reviewer loved that set, so we were pleased to hear that he is heading back to the Fringe this summer with a new one, 'Comfort Zone'.**

**To find out more about the show, about De Carlo's career thus far, and why he's ended up being resident in Brexit Britain, I arranged to have a quick chat.**

**CC: Let's start at the start for people who don't know about the start. How did you come to be a presenter on Rome's Radio Globo and how did that morph into a comedy career?**

FDC: Well, that's one of the strangest parts of my life! I was a little depressed about my experiences in a previous

job at the European Parliament - a serious job - so I decided that I wanted to change everything and that I would become a comedian.

Within a couple of weeks I found myself with a job doing prank calls on the radio... a huge change. The show became very popular - all my friends were totally shocked about how

quickly I went from boring discussions about Brussels to making silly phone calls to random people.

It was good for my personal mood - and I created some very strong friendships along the way - plus I started to enjoy making people laugh.

**CC: What is the stand-up comedy scene like in Italy - how does it differ from the UK**

FDC: It's a totally different market: fewer comedians, fewer comedy shows on the radio and TV, and - most notably of all - almost no comedy clubs. That has an impact, because it's via the everyday club work that you can develop a unique voice for your comedy and find your own style.

Italian comedy is traditionally based more on characters and imitations, though I think that the new generation of Italian comics are now more interested in stand up - and all around Italy we are seeing more and more stand up gigs taking place, and the audiences are growing.

**CC: What made you decide to start doing comedy in English?**

FDC: I always loved British comedy. I'm a huge fan of your classics. Plus, in English I can talk to a bigger audiences, even if the competition here is fierce, because there are so many good comedians. But working with them is a good way to get better.

**CC: Talk us through that first Edinburgh experience. How did it go?**

FDC: I had so much fun. I joined a group of international comedians from Russia, France and Germany, and we played altogether with Eddie Izzard and Dylan Moran in an incredible show called 'Comedy San Frontières'. It was amazing.

And it was very useful for building friendships with other comedians, which are really important, especially at the Fringe where you need to share the stress of performing in Edinburgh with people who are going through the same thing. The Edinburgh Fringe is a great experience, but it is also very 'demanding' - that's a word I learned that Festival, because everybody was using it!

**CC: Given the successes you'd had back home, what was it like coming to a festival where you were seen as a new act?**

FDC: One of the best things about doing gigs abroad is that the audience have no expectations. So, it's interesting to see how they react to your material, without knowing your background. That's why I believe it's very important to be honest on stage and introduce yourself in a proper way. People in the UK have a very good approach to newcomers; they want to see something new and different, without any prejudice.

**CC: When performing for a UK audience, can you simply translate your Italian material? Or do you need to write specific material for a British audience?**

FDC: Most of my material is about me, my experiences and my points of view about life, so it's very easy to translate. Obviously I have to be careful with references, but generally 75% of my show is the same in both languages.

That said, there will always be some differences. Even if I'm talking about personal or universal stuff, I believe that the sensibilities are different. And, of course, the UK is living through a very peculiar historical moment just now, which is why I wrote a lot of new material specifically for the British audience for this show.

**CC: Did performing in English open doors for you beyond the UK? Does performing in English give you an advantage on a global basis?**

FDC: Absolutely. And it was the plan from the beginning. Since my first Edinburgh run, I've gigged in South Africa, South Korea, Canada and in several European countries. Comedy is a global language and it has been incredible for me to travel so much. And it was really useful for my personal growth: when you travel, you meet new people, you have new experiences, basically you have new material. That's part of my new show.

**CC: Why did you decide to relocate to the UK?**

FDC: Simply because it's the best place for a comedian. You can improve yourself here and understand where you are as a writer and as a performer. The UK has always had the best comedy, music, art and theatre. I would like to understand the historical and cultural reasons behind this unbelievable condition. Also, after the Brexit referendum, the UK's society is in turmoil, and personally I love turmoil.

**CC: Ah yes, Brexit. What was it like watching the European Referendum campaign unfold?**

FDC: It was weird. I always thought of the UK as a place open to the world. Now you can see that the majority of the country wasn't so happy about that. I believe it's good that we start to understand that we cannot idealise society any more. We have to engage with different people if we want to predict events.

**CC: Given your time working at the European Parliament, do you think EU leaders - and the Remain campaign - could and should have done a better job defending the institution during the campaign?**

FDC: Obviously. If you lose, it means

that you didn't play so well. But it's very hard to make people understand complex messages and reality is very complex.

The Leave campaign had an easier job, because they could talk to the guts of the people, with very simple and very effective slogans. That's why populism is so popular everywhere, because traditional parties don't know how to explain to people that life is full of problems and that solutions are not easy to find.

Also, I think that - even though I will always believe in the dream of a more unified Europe - the European Union is very hard to defend, because it's perceived as a bureaucratic institution far removed from its citizens.

**CC: Has the Brexit result changed your view of Britain? Do you still want to live here?**

FDC: No, it hasn't. I will always want to live here. And I love history: we are living an historical moment and it's great to witness it.

**CC: Tell us about 'Comfort Zone', what are you trying to achieve in the show?**

FDC: I believe that my generation has a lot of responsibility for the things that are happening in the world. We are very good at blaming other people, but I think that if we are so shocked about the results of elections and referendums it's because we've spent too much time in our own comfort zones, maybe watching TV series and reviewing restaurants, which are my favourite things to do!

**CC: We are living in an era of lively, dramatic and sometimes worrying political debate. Does that make political comedy more attractive, for both performer and audience members?**

FDC: During Berlusconi's government in Italy we had an explosion of satire. But making fun of politicians can sometimes be counterproductive, because it helps make them familiar to the audience. And if you don't like the politicians, watching that satirical show sometimes makes you feel that you did something to stand against them, but in reality you just laughed at them and clapped your hands. Satire is not politics. In Italy we are still debating whether or not these kind of shows are actually helping the political elites.

**CC: Are you looking forward to returning the Edinburgh Fringe once again?**

FDC: I would love to do it every year, but it's very hard to write a new show every year. It takes a lot of time and thought. I've worked on this 2017 show for the last three years and I really hope that people will like it.

Francesco De Carlo performs 'Comfort Zone' at Underbelly George Square from 2-28 August.

# Matt Abbot: Two Little Ducks

CARO MEETS | SPOKEN WORD INTERVIEW

**We last came across spoken word creative Matt Abbot when he brought his debut Edinburgh show 'Matt Abbott Is Skint & Demoralised' for a short but acclaimed run at the 2015 Fringe, and it was great to hear that he will be back in the Scottish capital this summer for the whole festival. I spoke to him to find out about his career, why he likes mixing the cultural with the political, and what to expect from this year's show.**

**CM: Can you start by telling us what kind of content to expect from 'Two Little Ducks'...?**

MA: There are three key strands to 'Two Little Ducks'. The first one looks at the socio-economic climate which led to many traditionally working-class communities to vote for Brexit. The second one captures my experiences volunteering at the Calais Jungle last summer. And the third uses my favoured kitchen-sink realism genre, but gradually works to pull the whole show together at the climax.

There's also a peppering of social and observational humour. So it's observation, humanitarian activism, storytelling and characterisation all mixed in together.

**CM: ... and why exactly is it called 'Two Little Ducks'...?**

MA: One of the core traditions in strong working-class communities is activities such as bingo, and 'two little ducks' is a famous bingo call. They can't use those bingo calls any more because some of them (ie, 'two fat ladies' for 88) are deemed to be politically incorrect. Also, Calais is 22 miles from the UK.

The number 22 (or 2.2) also has a constant presence in the third strand, but that's fictionalised.

**CM: What wider themes does the show explore? Is the content entirely political?**

MA: I'd say it's more humanitarian and observational than anything else, in that it looks at the direct impact on people and communities. There is obviously a political element to the show, but it's very much politics with a small "p", if that makes sense. Rather than discuss policies and politicians, it looks at the impact, and the human element to what's happening in the world.

Over the last thirty years or so, many traditionally working-class communities have suffered with the decline of core industries, and more recently, austerity politics. I also quite bluntly recount some of the things

which I witnessed in Calais, which didn't receive anywhere near enough coverage in the mainstream media.

And as well as looking at a lot of the negative themes which in my opinion led to the Brexit vote, there's also a defiant celebration of traditional working-class culture; there is humour throughout the show, and rather than analyse from an outsider's perspective, I'm simply talking about the community that I was born and raised in; from a range of viewpoints.

**CM: You're described as a poet and activist. It sounds like the show deals with the kind of things you are 'active' about...?**

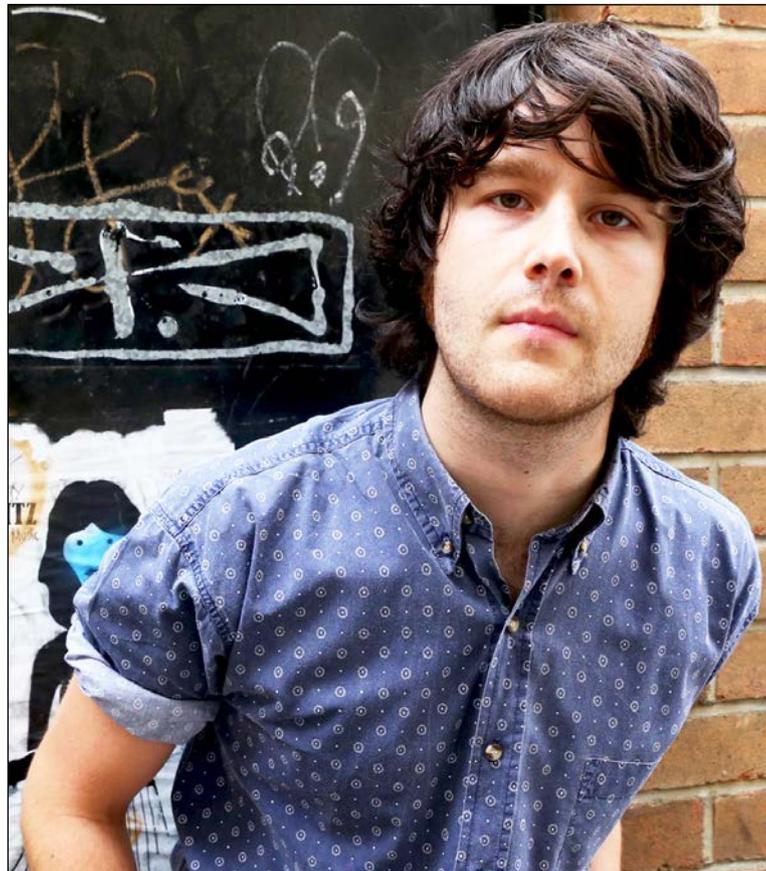
MA: Absolutely, yes. To be honest, the show is more a product of circumstance and experience than anything else. I'm able to write about the traditionally working-class communities which voted for Brexit because I grew up in a city which voted 66% Leave. I visited Calais a few times last summer because I wanted to help out and volunteer, more than anything else.

So every story in there - be it about homelessness, the education system, social exclusion, the refugee crisis, the NHS, etc - right through to overnight MegaBus marathons, festival sex and late night pie shops - comes directly from personal experience. My show is directly informed by my personal life and my activism.

**CM: What attracts you to the idea of combining culture with politics?**

MA: To me it comes entirely naturally. You should write about what you know and what you're passionate about, and for me, social and political activism has been incredibly important to me since my mid-late teens.

I also think that culture is a really important place for political discussion; in some ways it makes political issues more accessible, and I think it's a really useful way of framing certain arguments and raising



awareness, as well as motivating and challenging.

I completely understand why some artists choose to leave politics out entirely, because art and culture are a form of escapism, but each to their own. If I didn't write about political issues then I'd write about football and real ale, and I don't imagine that'd be quite as popular for some reason...

**CM: You touched on this earlier, but can you tell us more about the humorous side to the show?**

MA: I've peppered the show with humour throughout, because the last thing that I want is for it to feel really intense. It's not overly 'ranty' or 'preachy', it's just that naturally, a lot of the issues discussed are bleak by nature. But I've always used humour in my sets and I think it's really important. My delivery style is naturally engaging, accessible and humorous, and I've been keen to keep that in this show.

The humorous poems do have value and work in their own right, but they also serve as light-relief; almost like advert breaks in a documentary. But I'd never have anything there for the sake of it; as I say, they do have value in their own right.

**CM: You've already mentioned that you spent time volunteering in Calais. Can you tell us about it? What did you do and whom did you meet?**

MA: The first time I went there, I was taken by the National Union of Teachers, and a group of other activists that I loosely knew from West

Yorkshire. They were staying in quite a large house on the outskirts of Calais, and they drove me to/from the camp and the warehouses, and fed me and watered me as well. That was a really powerful experience.

After that, rather foolishly, I went on my own. Those experiences take centre stage because they were more harrowing and vivid. I felt pretty vulnerable at times, but obviously I'm not foolish enough to think that I was even remotely as vulnerable as the people in the camp. On one of my trips, I worked with a charity called Greenlight. I saw a large group wearing hi-vis and asked if I could join them, and ended up working with them all afternoon. I'm still in touch with some of the volunteers from that group.

I mainly did litter picking, cleaning out the water containers and sorting things in the warehouses, but I also helped with a few English lessons here and there.

**CM: How and why did you become a poet? Was it something you aimed for, or fell into?**

MA: I started writing and performing spoken word poetry when I was 17. Before that point I'd had absolutely no interest in poetry whatsoever, but had always been obsessed with song lyrics, and words in general. The indie music scene was thriving, and Wakefield (my home city) had a pretty strong scene as well. I was at 6th Form College, so you can imagine the mindset.

I became obsessed with a band called Reverend & The Makers. Their

frontman, Jon McClure, used to perform short bursts of spoken word before songs. Through that I was introduced to John Cooper Clarke, and it only took a few months before I'd started penning my own. And that's how the whole thing started.

**CM: What's been the highlight of being a poet so far?**

MA: Probably my work on the Stand Up For Labour/JC4PM tour. I joined in March 2016, and I was immediately doing theatres and venues with sold-out audiences of around 2000 people. So far I've shared a stage with Paul Weller, Ken Loach, Sara Pascoe, Shappi Khorshandi, Mark Steel, Francesca Martinez, Jeremy Hardy, Grace Petrie, The Farm, Attila the Stockbroker and loads more.

Political speakers have included Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell and Angela Rayner. So I'm performing with top level acts alongside top level political figures, which is a dream come true. The highlight of this was two nights at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool last September. It was an unbelievable atmosphere.

**CM: What made you decide to return to the Fringe in 2017, after that first run in 2015?**

MA: The 2015 run was really me just getting a taste of the action, so that I could see what the Fringe was all about. I immediately knew that it was the ultimate output for my work. I've always focused on performance above everything else, and the Fringe is the biggest and best stage in the world. I think no matter what happens, my Fringe shows will always be the driving force behind my creative output.

**CM: What do you like about Edinburgh? What will you be doing when you're not performing? Do you have a list of shows you are planning to see?**

MA: Edinburgh is a stunning city, particularly during summer. Obviously I'll be doing a lot of promo, but in my down time, I plan on doing a lot of reading/writing in the Meadows; some fitness work (partly for health, partly for routine), and definitely other shows - although I haven't properly looked into that yet. I think I'll largely play it by ear.

I've promised myself that I won't be constantly on the lash, because I can see myself burning out if I do that. I think I'll just do what I can to relax, stay on top of my game, and manage myself both physically and mentally. I'm aware of how intense it's going to be doing this on my own, but I'm excited for the challenge.

Matt Abbot performs 'Two Little Ducks' at Underbelly Cowgate from 3-27 Aug.

Photo by  
Idil Sukan



## Caroline Mabey: Quetzals

### CARO MEETS | COMEDY INTERVIEW

**Caroline Mabey heads northwards this summer as a pretty much verified Edinburgh Veteran (we should get them those ticks like on Twitter) as she presents her fifth full length show 'Quetzals', which is mostly about the fact that her memory isn't quite what it used to be, and an attempt to memorise the 103 allowable two-letter Scrabble words.**

**Caro: Right, let's start with what's coming up this August: what's your new show about?**

Caroline: My show is about having a great time. Probably the best time you can have in Edinburgh in August. I mean there's not much else going on here, is there? This town is dead! Maybe that's why they have so many ghost tours. Amirite? Actually, the

ghost tours look great. My show's probably the second best time you can have. Go on the ghost tour.

**Caro: What made you want to do a show with memory as a theme?**

Caroline: I can't remember! Of course I can, but if I told you I'd have to kill myself.

**Caro: Do you touch on any other themes within the show?**

Caroline: Scrabble. The ghosts of childhood aspirations. Eye tests. Timecakes, and how to turn a positive into a negative (and back again).

**Caro: Do you stick mostly to planned material or do you improvise?**

Caroline: Even though most of what I say might look like just a load of nonsense off the top of my head, it's actually exquisitely-crafted, high-end bespoke stand-up comedy. Obviously I can't remember most of it so luckily my show has quite a lot of improvisation built in. There's no malevolent audience participation, but every show will be different depending on who walks in (and who walks out).

**Caro: As well as your fifth full length show, you're also bringing a second instalment of your work as a double act with Michael Legge, the Two Stupids. How did your collaboration with him come about?**

Caroline: Great story. Michael and I have always hated each other so in 2015 we decided to ruin each other's Edinburghs by collaborating. And we've just gone from strength to strength to strength.

**Caro: What can we expect from the new Two Stupids show?**

Caroline: Expect all you like, the Two Stupids will confound you. It's basically anything too stupid for a proper show. Silly, fun, joyful idiocy. And Michael Legge shouting.

**Caro: And what's all this about an audiobook...?**

Caroline: Alan Partridge did it. Tina Fey did it. And now it's the Two Stupids' turn. It's called 'Two Stupids: Fifty Shades of Two' and is set to be PHENOMENAL. Basically, it's an opportunity for us to show off without having to do any facial expressions, which can be pretty exhausting.

**Caro: You've been performing in Edinburgh for quite a few years now. What keeps you coming back to the Festival? Do you completely love it or are there times when you hate it?**

Caroline: Anyone who tells you they completely love the Edinburgh Festival needs to go to the doctor immediately. I do love it, but it can be a cruel mistress. But it's good for you to have all your hopes dashed once a year. Isn't it?

**Caro: Other than performing, what do you like to do when you are in Edinburgh?**

Caroline: I like a bit of whiskey, a lot of coffee and some hot museum action. I like to go to places that haven't been infected by the festival, to find a bit of calmth.

**Caro: Are there any shows you are definitely planning to see?**

Caroline: So many! Sarah Kendall, Jordan Brookes, Sara Pascoe, Peter Brush, Simon Munnery.

**Caro: What do you get up to the rest of the year? Is it all stand-up or do you do other things too?**

Caroline: I do so many things! A big project right now is my podcast, called Self Renovators.

**Caro: Can you tell us a bit more about it?**

Caroline: Yes! It's self-improvement for lazy-boneses. Each episode we (me and American comic and former psychotherapist Taylor Glenn) road test a self-help tip we find on the internet. It's fun and silly but serious enough to be useful.

**Caro: Do you have any grand plans for the future?**

Caroline: Total world domination.

Caroline performs 'Quetzals' at Just The Tonic at The Caves from 3-27 Aug, and in 'Michael Legge & Caroline Mabey Are Two Stupids' at Laughing Horse @ Free Sisters from 16-27 Aug.

## Helen Norton and Jonathan White: To Hell In A Handbag

### CHRIS MEETS | THEATRE INTERVIEW

**In much the same way Tom Stoppard reckoned that 'Hamlet' characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern deserved their own play, Helen Norton and Jonathan White couldn't help wondering what else we'd discover if we got to spend a little more time with Miss Prism and Canon Chasuble, two minor characters in Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance Of Being Earnest'.**

**Well, now we know, courtesy of their new play 'To Hell In A Handbag'. Having heard great things about the piece after its debut at the Dublin Fringe, I decided to throw some questions at the both of them as they head to Edinburgh for a festival run at the Assembly Rooms.**

**CC: Tell us the basic premise of 'To Hell In A Handbag'.**

HN+JW: It's a 'companion play' to 'The Importance Of Being Earnest' by Oscar Wilde. We focus on two minor characters from that play - Miss Prism and Canon Chasuble - and what they get up to when they're offstage in Wilde's play. As Tom Stoppard said in 'Rosencrantz And Guildenstern Are Dead', "look on every exit as being an entrance somewhere else" ... and that's what we do. So ours happens in real-time over the course of the action of acts two and three of 'The Importance'.

**CC: Where did the idea come from to write a play around these two characters?**

HN+JW: It was born of our frustration at the theatre world's singular failure to cast us in these parts in the original play, a casting which we felt was not only ideal but preordained! In desperation, we had no option but to write the play ourselves.

**CC: Did the story emerge from the characters or did you already have a basic plot in mind?**

HN+JW: Very much the former. We looked for the tiny clues about their background and history which Oscar had left us in his original. But we also discussed what their lives as satellites to the celestial bodies of the upper class might be like and the possibly grim reality of making ends meet.

**CC: Does it help to know 'The Importance Of Being Earnest' when seeing your play? I mean, I assume most Fringe-goers do - but would it be a different piece if they didn't?**

HN+JW: We have been assured by many audience members unfamiliar with 'The Importance' that they missed nothing, that the story was crystal clear. That said, there are hidden treats

for those familiar with the 'first' play, which occasionally overlaps with the world of ours.

**CC: Do you think Oscar Wilde missed a trick not employing these characters more?**

HN+JW: No, we think they served his purpose admirably as exemplars of stuffy middle-class morality confronted with the less than admirable behaviour of their 'betters'. We, however, have the luxury of digging a little deeper below that surface of respectability.

**CC: What do you think he'd make of 'To Hell in A Handbag'?**

HN+JW: We like to think he would enjoy it ... safe in the knowledge that we posed no threat to his place in the pantheon.

**CC: You performed the piece at the Dublin Fringe Festival. How did it go?**

HN+JW: Very, very well. The Dublin Fringe is slightly more youth-oriented than its Edinburgh counterpart and someone suggested that we probably increased the age demographic of participants by about 150%! That said,

we got a very warm reception from critics and audiences alike.

**CC: What's it like both writing and performing the piece - how does it compare to acting in someone else's play?**

HN+JW: Well, when the lines aren't going in - or staying in - you've no-one to blame but yourselves. The corollary of that is that if a line isn't working you can improve it or lose it with impunity. That said, we have received much praise for the script and, as first-time playwrights, that's particularly gratifying.

**CC: Are there any other minor characters from other plays who you think deserve a story of their own?**

HN+JW: There are undoubtedly. And not just minor characters, but also characters who play important roles in the plot but never actually turn up. And we're not just talking about Godot.

Helen Norton and Jonathan White perform 'To Hell In A Handbag' at the Assembly Rooms from 3-27 Aug.



“ **MILLION DOLLAR BABY**

MEETS

**THE SOCIAL NETWORK** ”

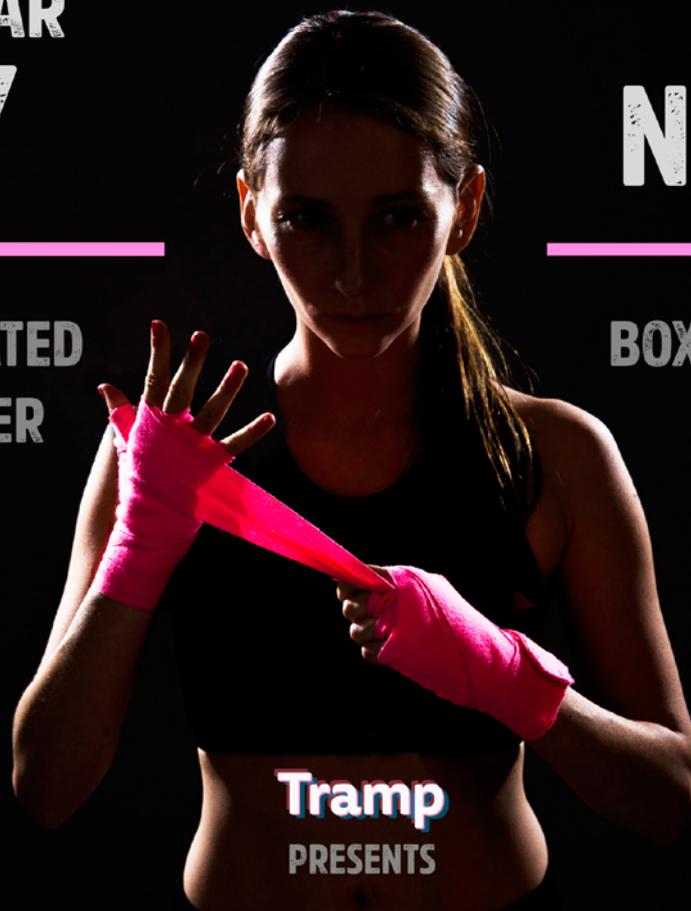
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## Rebecca Johannsen: Women At War



### CARO MEETS | THEATRE INTERVIEW

**Plays about war are not a rare thing, especially not in Edinburgh, but when I heard about ‘Women In War’, it immediately piqued my interest, because of its focus on a different kind of active service, carried out by the US Army’s Female Engagement Team. I spoke to the show’s creator, performer and academic Rebecca Johannsen, to find out more.**

**CM: Can you start by telling us what to expect from the show? Is it the story of one person or many? Is there an overarching narrative, or is it a collection of stories?**

RJ: The play weaves together stories from interviews I conducted with three different women who, from 2012-2013, were all a part of the US Army’s Female Engagement Team, a unit whose mission was to enter into combat zones alongside platoons of male soldiers to build relationships and gather intelligence from the women in Afghanistan where they were deployed.

The very notion of this type of challenging operation piqued my interest, especially when the army had to gather intelligence yet they were operating in an environment where Afghan cultural norms dictates that males are prohibited from even looking at Afghan women let alone talking to them. Danger aside, this type of operation put females at the centre of war. My main thoughts were - What was the experience like? how did this type of engagement affect a woman’s psyche? and what about the Afghani women, how do they relate to other women coming from a world where, on balance, there is gender parity?

When I started conducting the interviews last year, I went in with a simple question of “what happens when women engage in conflict in this way?” I didn’t really have any other goal than to let these women tell me where the story should go. It was actually quite striking how quickly the narrative for *Women at War* developed from their experiences. The play combines the women’s stories into two characters and follows their journey in all its rawness from joining the military, to how they were treated by the men in the military, how they were treated by the men in Afghanistan, their relationships with the women they met there, and finally their struggles coming home.

**CM: What wider themes does the play explore?**

RJ: Although I started the project with a question, I honestly don’t think I’ve answered it with this piece, I think it has just raised more questions. I think it’s quite easy for people in the developed, largely secular world to see the overt misogyny represented by the Taliban, but the play forces audiences to explore the subtle, deeply entrenched forms of misogyny we women still experience; the echoes of the Taliban world view are clear in the experiences of the women during their training for the unit.

I think it also shows that, in spite of the goal of war to dehumanise the other, we all strive for a connection. The women represented in this play all are trying to connect, some successfully, and others not. Their job was to connect with the women and children of Afghanistan and they formed lasting bonds that have re-shaped how some of them think about the world.

**CM: Your blurb mentions verbatim theatre, but also movement, poetry and visual art - how does this all blend together?**

RJ: I’ve worked very closely with the playwright Erik Ehn, who uses real experiences (and often verbatim accounts) as the subjects of his plays, though he breaks the language apart and explores the visual imagery of the verbatim experience through fractured language. Though this piece is not nearly as abstract as his work (how these women told me their stories was often more revealing than the content, so I wanted to preserve that), the play

still explores the nature of trauma. When a person suffers a trauma, they don’t just have a memory of it, they actually relive the experience visually and bodily, so the poetic, fractured language along with movement and visuals helps to reveal the trauma that the soldiers may or may not be willing to share with direct verbal communication.

**CM: How did you go about finding the stories?**

RJ: I had been introduced to members of a FET unit in the Marine Corps several years ago and that ignited the drive to create this piece, though life got in the way for several years. I found the women I interviewed for the play through an organization called the Women’s Veterans Alliance.

The first woman that contacted me after I posted the notice asking for interview subjects happened to be the non-commissioned officer for the unit, so once she spread the word to the unit, several of the women under her command reached out and agreed to be interviewed. For each subject, I met with them informally before we conducted an “on the record” interview so that they could ask me any questions about the project and gain their trust. The first interview subject burst into tears before I even asked the first question, hugged me, and thanked me for caring enough about what they did to share their story. I found with all of them, sharing their stories with me was incredibly therapeutic.

They would often cry when sharing something particularly harrowing, though they would still remain calm and monotone in their voice. I’ve grown to care considerably for them and sharing their story honestly and with heart means a great deal. They are my heroes.

**CM: Did you do any other research to create it? How long did it take to put the show together?**

RJ: I grew up in San Diego, California, so the military was ever-present in my life. We have a Naval base, a Naval Air Field, and a major Marine Corps base within the city and we have a large veteran population, so everyone in the city is exposed to the military way of life. I did do quite a bit of outside research and I conducted interviews with other members of the military

that gave me context for the play, though they aren’t a direct part of the narrative.

**CM: What inspired you to create a show tackling this particular subject?**

RJ: I am good friends with a retired Marine who worked closely with the FET in Iraq and he first told me about them and introduced me to one of the women he worked with. I was struck by the seeming conflict in their mission. They trained like the infantry to go into combat zones where survival is often dictated by dehumanising the other side, yet their mission was to engage on a personal level with the women in the villages in Iraq and Afghanistan, to humanize them again.

Their job was to talk to people. That concept is what I really wanted to explore. These women are tough, but they ultimately approach conflict differently than men do. Their missions often did not succeed because the men in command didn’t give them all of the resources they needed to be successful. It was a new approach to conflict, and that met a lot of internal resistance.

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

RJ: Edinburgh is one of the best festivals for new work in the world. I also love the city. I think it is my favourite city in Europe. And the city during the festival has such a vibrant, artistic energy that makes it a really thrilling place to discover new work. I think this play has something really vital to say and Edinburgh is a great testing ground for finding its voice. I am also really intrigued to discover the non-American response to the piece. There are some interesting perceptions of the American military that people in the UK have shared with me, so I’m interested to see how this play influences that perception.

**CM: Have you performed at the Festival before?**

RJ: I have only been as a spectator, so this will be a new experience for me. As a participant, I loved being able to see so many new plays, all of which were top quality. The energy of the city is just so vibrant and supportive of artists during the festival.

‘Women At War’ is on at C cubed from 3-28 Aug.

# TW:TALKS

ThreeWeeks interviews to listen to - look out for Edinburgh Fringe editions at [thisweektalks.com](http://thisweektalks.com)

# THREE TO SEE

## ThreeWeeks editor Caro Moses recommends plenty of great shows with her Three To See tips

### BOOK EVENTS

#### THREE BOOK FESTIVAL SESSIONS FOR KIDS

##### Busting Book Myths with Vivian French | Edinburgh International Book Festival | 13 Aug

"Expect stories, fun and plenty of participation as leading children's author Vivian French leads you on a cover to cover journey through her hilarious, myth-busting picture book



about books and reading, 'The Covers of My Book are Too Far Apart!'" I think this might possibly be the perfect Book Fest activity for those children who are struggling with reading, or just don't like to read, and might just have the power to help them approach it anew.

##### Good vs Evil - The Great Debate | Edinburgh International Book Festival | 24 Aug

One for your older children, this, aged from ten to fourteen, and tackling the rather interesting subject of the never-ending battle between good and evil. Expect lively debate from authors Dave Rudden, Maz Evans, Shane Hegarty and Rupert Wallis and enjoy their insights into the world of the fantasy genre.

##### Elizabeth Laird and Gill Lewis - Migration Stories | Edinburgh International Book Festival | 26 Aug

Another one for the 10-14 age group, focusing on the currently very pertinent topic of migration, and

featuring two award winning writers who will discuss themes they address in their own work: Elizabeth Laird's 'Welcome to Nowhere' sees central character Omar forced to flee his home in Syria because of the civil war, while in Gill Lewis' 'A Story Like the Wind', refugees crowded onto a boat in the middle of the sea share their stories with each other.

#### THREE BOOK FESTIVAL SESSIONS FOR GROWN-UPS

##### Abubakar Adam Ibrahim & Dorit Rabinyan | Edinburgh International Book Festival | 14 Aug

Two different writers speak about two different books, united by the theme of love. Nigeria Prize for Literature winner Abubakar Adam Ibrahim is the author of 'Season of Crimson Blossoms', a novel about the connection between a young gang leader and a 55 year old widow. Dorit Rabinyan's best selling work 'All The Rivers', which was banned in Israeli schools, tells the story of the taboo relationship between a Palestinian painter and an Israeli translator.

##### A Piece Of You | Edinburgh International Book Festival | 14-18 Aug

If you think that the Book Festival only involves people talking about books, then here's one of the events that will prove that your assumption is a bit sweeping. This is an intimate chamber concert, intended for no more than three people at a time, held by performance artist, cellist and composer Greg Sinclair, who will use your innermost thoughts to create for you your very own score. Sounds amazing.

##### Alex Renton | Edinburgh International Book Festival | 27 Aug

This looks like it will be enormously interesting. Alex Renton talks about his book 'Stiff Upper Lip', in which he investigates the tradition of schooling among Britain's 'elites'. The author takes a look at the unhappiness his own boarding school education caused, questioning the impact that this system has on those who go through it, especially bearing in mind that



many of those who do go through it end up running our country. Yikes.

### CABARET

#### THREE CABARET FAVOURITES

##### Jojo Bellini - Crash Bang Cabaret | The Stand Comedy Club 2 | 2-27 Aug

We love Jojo Bellini, who this year presents what's described as a hilariously naughty cabaret about car accidents, kink and cucumbers. "Who is this woman?" asks the blurb, "Where has she come from? How did she recover from such a crippling car accident?" Perhaps you'll find the answers to these questions (though I



make absolutely no guarantees) if you skip along and book your tickets for this fabulous and funny show.

##### Tomas Ford - Craptacular | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 2-28 Aug

Another TW favourite is "International cabaret sex god" Tomás Ford who offers up this collection of the trashiest pop songs of all time "in ways you never asked to hear them". You don't even have to take our word for it as to how brilliantly entertaining this chap is, because he is critically acclaimed - by other critics, obv - everywhere he goes.

##### The Gin Whore Tour | Paradise In Augustines | 21-27 Aug

Okay, I admit it, this isn't strictly a TW favourite. I picked it because gin is my favourite, and I couldn't resist a show that has "warning: alcohol will be served" as part of its Fringe listing. And, you know, it's educational, because as well as getting to taste four lovely gins, you also learn about the history of this magical liquor. See you there.

#### THREE MAGIC SHOWS

##### Kevin Quantum - Anti-Gravity | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 2-27 Aug

There was a time when magic was



all but absent from the Fringe, a neglected genre with only occasional representation. These days you can't move for magicians, and that includes this one, Kevin Quantum, who appeals to my love of inserting science into entertainment by, er, inserting science into entertainment. He's studied both physics and magic, so you're in great hands.

##### A Case Of Wonders By Sam Fitton | La Belle Angele | 5-26 Aug

I picked this particular magic show because it's a more theatrical piece of entertainment, and I like the idea of magic with a storyline. 'A Case Of Wonders' combines magic, comedy and special effects whilst telling the tale of how, after missing his train, Sam gets stranded on a station

# THREE TO SEE

WE RECOMMEND SHOWS FOR YOU TO SEE



John Robertson

platform, where all matter of strange goings-on occur.

## Aaron Calvert - Awaken | La Belle Angele | 5-26 Aug

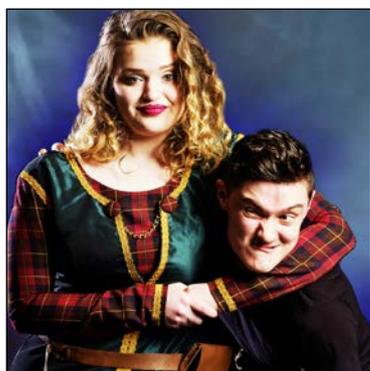
This one made the list because when we sent our reviewer to see Aaron Calvert's 2016 show 'Mind Games', she was seriously impressed by his very slick routine of hypnosis and mind games, and ability to deliver trick after trick with mesmerising precision and pace. Definitely one for the list if you are a mind-magic aficionado.

## CHILDREN'S SHOWS

### THREE MACBETHS FOR JUNIORS

#### Brave MacBeth | Gilded Balloon at The Museum + Gilded Balloon at Rose Theatre | 4-27 Aug

I took my daughter to see 'Brave MacBeth' at Gilded Balloon at The Museum last year and it was so immensely entertaining that we would both have been more than happy to go back and see it again. In fact, we might have been perfectly happy to go back and see it again and again and again. The cast were brilliant, and the show was hilarious, which is possibly not what you'd expect when the source material is a tragedy, but, you know, it's a great way to make



Shakespeare's darker work entirely accessible to kids.

#### Creepy MacBeth | The Royal Scots Club | 7-12 Aug

If, on the other hand, you have the sort of child older than nine that loves creepy stuff more than funny stuff (mine is a fan of both), this version of The Scottish Play might be a great option, and an added appeal lies in the fact that this one is performed by a young cast. Expect a mixture of Shakespearean and modern language, less alienating to youthful ears, and a show which doesn't avoid the darker elements of the story.

#### Is This A Dagger? The Story Of MacBeth | Scottish Storytelling Centre | 3-20 Aug

In another, different approach to the Shakespeare classic, storyteller Andy Cannon gives you a one-man rendition, promising his audiences "a thousand-year journey from fact to fiction and back again". Telling tales this way is a wonderful tradition, and you can guarantee that this acclaimed writer and performer will keep your kids spellbound.

### THREE COMEDY FOR KIDS

#### The Dark Room For Kids | Just The Tonic At The Community Project | 4-27 Aug

In the MacBeth section we talked about kids who like creepy and kids who like funny, and of course, kids who like both. If yours fall into that last camp, and are a bit older, then choosing TW favourite John Robertson's special children's version of his cult Fringe show for one of your festival outings is what they call a no-brainer. Fun, yet fear-filled, an interactive adventure, and one that the whole family will enjoy. Or will they? "If you win, there are terrible prizes! But if you lose, The Dark Room keeps whichever of your parents you like less." Eeek.

#### Kidocracy | The Stand Comedy Club 3&4 | 3-20 Aug

Here's another interactive experience from another TW favourite, Keith Farnon, and it's got a really interesting aim in that it aspires to show children the importance of participation in a democracy, and introduces them to concepts relating to politics, governing and leadership, through fun stuff. Farnon takes on the alter-ego of Brehon, an ancient Irish know-it-all, and involves as many kids as possible. Brilliant for anyone over the age of 6.

#### This Is Your Trial (PG) | Heroes @ Monkey Barrel | 31 Jul-27 Aug

Another family version of a tried and tested favourite, the courtroom based improv comedy in which guest comedians act as lawyers, prosecuting and defending charges set against members of the audience. Lots and lots of great acts have appeared at the shows in the past, and it's a great concept, so I pretty much guarantee you lots and lots of laughs.

## COMEDY

### THREE SKETCH COMEDY SHOWS

#### Margarita Dreams | Underbelly Med Quad | 2-28 Aug

I tell you what, I'm dreaming of margaritas right now, which is a bit sad really, because I am not allowed to drink any at the moment because of the drugs I am on (prescription drugs, actually, stop judging me). Perhaps instead I can drown my sorrows in the joys of this extremely promising sketch show, penned by much acclaimed veteran comedy writer and lyricist Richard Sparks, and performed by four definite up and comers.

#### Sisters - White Noise | Pleasance Courtyard | 2-27 Aug

The name of this act might be considered a bit misleading in the sense that this sketch duo is the

pairing of Christy White-Spinner and Mark Jones, who look suspiciously like boys. But that's not really relevant, because what you want is some quality entertainment, and I feel very confident that these two can provide it. Even though this is their debut Edinburgh hour as a pair, they have loads and loads of previous relevant experience so are totally up to the job.

#### Goose: Amphetawaltz | Assembly George Square Gardens | 3-27 Aug

Another duo that have long been on our favourites list, though it's a duo with a difference because while they - Adam Drake and Ben Rowse



- both write the show, only one of them - Adam - performs it, while the other - yes, Ben - directs. They always get super reviews from our writers, and they're describing this year's production as "their most ambitious show yet", so I reckon we can all expect good things.

### THREE US IMPORTS

#### Sid Singh - A Singh In The North | Laughing Horse @ Dropkick Murphy's | 3-27 Aug

It's often the case that acts who are big or on the up in the US come to Edinburgh and nobody knows who they are, which it's why it's always

worth taking a closer look at them. First up is Sid Singh, whose first solo comedy album has been doing rather well in the American charts of late. According to my sources, he tackles some personal subjects - including the discomfort of being brown in



America and being an atheist who regrets it - and all with a hilarious approach.

#### James Adomian: Lacking In Character | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 2-27 Aug

Another excellent US act, stand-up comedian, actor and impressionist, known for his work on many high profile TV shows as well as for his podcast appearances and live performances. In this show, he mixes his own voice with those of the many different characters he's known for, as he explores the topics of politics and pop culture from a queer and rather singular point of view.

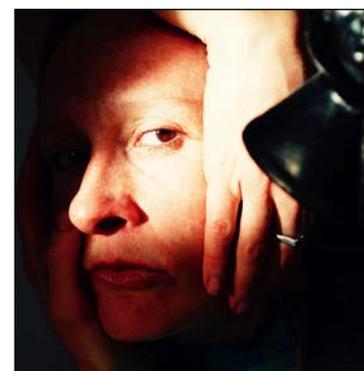
#### Butt Kapinski | Pleasance Dome | 2-27 Aug

Private eye Butt Kapinski - aka clowning and improv expert Deanna Fleysher - presides over a choose-your-own-adventure type show, described as part comedy and part social experiment: Kapinski roams through the audience bending gender and expectations by casting men as whores and women as abusers. Don't dare to miss this acclaimed, immersive, award-winning comedy.

### THREE BITS OF THEATRICAL COMEDY

#### Beak Speaks | Underbelly Cowgate | 3-27 Aug

Here's some very promising character comedy, a show focusing on the title character Gillian Beak, who is a



doyenne of Fringe with thirty years of experience, and is here to lead a masterclass and share with you her lifetime of experience and theatrical anecdotes. She's the creation of talented multi-tasking creative Sarah Thom, and I think it would be a mistake to miss the opportunity to see her in action. So, er, don't.

**Boris and Sergey's One Man Extravaganza | Assembly George Square Theatre | 2-27 Aug**

Listed in comedy, but far from being your standard stand-up, Flabbergast Theatre's puppet-starring, physically theatrical shows are clever, funny, poignant and action-packed, not to mention hugely acclaimed and award-winning. If you think that puppets are for kids, it's time to check your culture prejudices and give this a shot, especially if your taste for humour runs to the dark side. I promise you won't regret it.

**Puppet Fiction | Laughing Horse At The Counting House | 3-27 Aug**

Speaking of which, here's another marionette fuelled spectacle, and how could you refuse it when the tagline is "Everybody be cool, this is a motherf\*cking puppet show"? This cracking looking comedy from New Zealand is another award winner, and, as you might expect, pays homage to the work of Tarantino with no doubt hilarious results.

**THREE LOTS OF QUIRKY COMEDY**

**Woolly: The Morose Merino | Assembly George Square Theatre | 3-28 Aug**

When I chose to write a category involving quirky comedy the intention was to choose quirky sounding comedy, and it looks like I might actually have selected acts based on their quirky looking publicity shots. But to be fair, that's good enough for me. First up, a man dressed like a sheep: Alexander Cofield tells his tale of being a rejected, frustrated twenty-something who dealt with that situation by running away to a sheep shearing shed in Australia, and won a nomination for Best Comedy Award at the 2016 Melbourne Fringe.

**Kat Bond - Loo Roll | Pleasance Courtyard | 2-28 Aug**

Here's someone who won my heart



earlier this year with her publicity shot, in which she sports a sort of hat, or perhaps wimple, constructed entirely of loo roll. But there's more to recommend her than that. The actress, writer, comedian and clown, as seen on TV, radio and as one of excellent double act That Pair brings her debut solo show to Edinburgh following a triumphant run at the 2017 Vault Festival. Very silly, lovely, and clever.

**Lucy Pearman - Maid Of Cabbage | Heroes @ Monkey Barrel | 3-27 Aug**

I love cabbage (the truth is that I have a mild addiction to coleslaw), and I saw some funny photos of Lucy Pearman and a cabbage, and then I remembered that she is one half of the lovely LetLuce and I knew this show was destined for my to see list. But will it be quirky, I hear you ask, so let me qualify: it won't just be quirky, it will actually also be bonkers. Hurrah.

**THREE TW FAVOURITES**

**Yianni Agisilaou: Pockets of Equality | Banshee Labyrinth | 5-27 Aug**

It's a memorable name, so if you've already been exposed to the work of this esteemed purveyor of comedy, then I am pretty sure you'll recall it. If you haven't been, then it's time,



because Yianni is completely awesome. So awesome that we gave him an award that time, and we have never once regretted it. His show this year is inspired by an issue close to my heart - the fact that they don't put proper bloomin' pockets in women's clothes - so I am not going to miss this one.

**Ian Smith - Snowflake | Underbelly Med Quad | 2-27 Aug**

The trouble with a name like Ian Smith, on the other hand, is that it doesn't quite stand out here in the UK as much as something like Yianni Agisilaou. However, this comedian stands out when it comes to what our reviewers think of him because they have never, ever said a bad word about him, and he's always getting top starred critiques. Don't think twice about it, just book tickets now, I guarantee it will be a good night.

**Michael Legge - Jerk | The Stand Comedy Club 2 | 3-27 Aug**  
Another deserving ThreeWeeks

Editors' Award-winner, the brilliant Michael Legge, who'll be wondering aloud about something I often wonder aloud about myself, given all the daily horrors, mini horrors and micro horrors going on in the world: Why aren't people more ashamed of themselves? Sounds like he'll be demanding answers, though, so maybe do some preparation before you go.

**THREE HELPINGS OF MUSICAL COMEDY**

**Harriet Braine - Total Eclipse Of The Art | Laughing Horse @ The Golf Tavern | 4-27 Aug**

This comedy performer is definitely



on the up and up, and has proof, given that in 2016 she reached the final of the So You Think You're Funny contest, and in the same year won the 2016 Funny Women Stage Award. This, her debut solo hour, touches on current

politics and philosophy as well as taking you on an educational journey via the medium of her (admittedly rather niche) art history songs, which, she's convinced, can be "a remedy for the broken hearts and minds of a broken world".

**Imaginary Radio | Just The Tonic At The Mash House | 3-27 Aug**

Hosted by the talented and acclaimed Drennon Davis, 'Imaginary Radio' is what you might call a cult hit, and is a dark parody of US radio offering a satirical take on American consumer culture. You can expect live music, musical impressions, one man sketches and beatboxing, plus a rotating line up of high calibre guests.

# THREE TO SEE

WE RECOMMEND SHOWS FOR YOU TO SEE



Djuki Mala

## Flo & Joan: The Kindness Of Stranglers | Just The Tonic at The Tron | 3-26 Aug

You might have come across these two because a song they did about the horrors of 2016 went a bit viral a wee while back, but honestly, I wanted to recommend them because they chose to call their show 'The Kindness Of Stranglers', because I am a big fan of word play. There are of course lots of other reasons to recommend them - their wealth of experience and degree of critical acclaim, for example - but they are also sisters and play nice together, which is lovely.

## THREE PROMISING NEWCOMERS

### Kae Kurd - Kurd Your Enthusiasm | Pleasance Courtyard | 2-27 Aug

Well, this is his Fringe debut, but he might already be on your radar because of his appearances on BBC3, All 4, Channel 5 and BBC Radio 1Xtra, and because of various award nominations. As well as being super sharp and very funny, he also has some very interesting subject matter to get his teeth into, as he came to the UK as a political refugee, leaving his native country of Iraq when he was a baby.

### Julio Torres - My Favourite Shapes | Underbelly Cowgate | 3-27 Aug

New to these shores, but established in America as a writer and actor on 'Saturday Night Live', Julio Torres' debut Edinburgh show sounds... well, kind of odd, but compelling: "Julio guides a camera through his favourite shapes" runs the blurb. "Plexi-glass squares, triangles, spheres, a sad crumpled wrapper that reminds him of Melania Trump, a self-conscious Faberge who wonders if he's too much." He's certainly piqued my interest.

### Evelyn Mok - Hymen Manoeuvre | Pleasance Courtyard | 2-27 Aug

Another act that has had a fair amount of media exposure, and has been compared to US comedian Amy



Schumer, so you might already be aware of her, and entirely poised to take in her first, much anticipated Edinburgh show, which takes a look at first-generation guilt, intersectionality and adult virginity. Sounds like quite a mix.

## DANCE

### THREE DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATRE SHOWS

#### Djuki Mala | Assembly George Square Theatre | 3-28 Aug

Award winning Aboriginal dance and YouTube sensations Djuki Mala make their UK debut with this showcase of their unique and high energy fusion of traditional Yolngu and contemporary pop culture, dance and storytelling. Expect a brilliantly entertaining physical show with a healthy helping of comedy and clowning, which I suspect will be genuinely exhilarating.

#### Yo, Carmen | Edinburgh Playhouse | 12-13 Aug

Spanish dancer, choreographer and

pioneer of contemporary flamenco Maria Pagés brings together eight dancers and seven musicians to create a radical re-imagining of Bizet's classic opera heroine. The result promises to be visionary and flamboyant, a beautiful blend of dance, music, poetry and theatre, and will of course appeal to anyone who, like me, is kind of in love with flamenco.

#### Skin | Pleasance Courtyard | 2-28 Aug

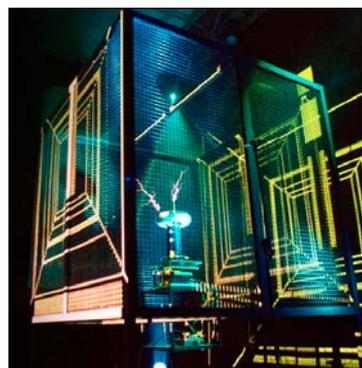
If you attended the festival in 2016 Or 2015, you may have seen 201 Dance Company's highly regarded 'Smother', an emotionally charged piece about relationships, addiction and commitment. This year the contemporary hip hop dance ensemble are back with a new show about a boy's journey through gender transition. The show fuses urban and contemporary styles with an original score, and, like smother, is choreographed by the talented Andrea Walker.

## MUSIC

### THREE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SHOWS

#### XFRMR | The Leith Volcano | 22-26 Aug

This is a rather interesting science/art/music melange, in which artist



Robbie Thomson uses the sonic capabilities of the Tesla coil to create an extraordinary work, synthesising sound waves that alter the frequency of the coil's output to produce distorted tones and harsh percussive stabs. Fascinating.

#### Dangerous Women | Space Triplex | 21-26 Aug

There are lots and lots of acapella shows at the fringe, but if you're a fan of acapella, or looking for a great family outing, then this troupe of singers - The Accidentals - should definitely be on your list, because they've a number of well reviewed, sell out Fringe shows behind them. You will definitely have a good time with this all-female, fun loving lot.

#### Martin Creed's Words and Music | The Studio | 4-27 Aug

Another mash up of art and music, this time over at the Edinburgh International Festival, where artist, musician and Turner Prize-winner Martin Creed presents a "delightfully nonconformist" evening of "words, music and more". Expect said evening to land somewhere between a contemporary music hall show and an art lecture, and to be punctuated by silliness, humour and subversion in the artist's highly original style.

### THREE CLASSICAL AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC SHOWS

#### Don Giovanni | Festival Theatre | 9-12 Aug

You may remember pioneering Hungarian musician Iván Fischer's acclaimed re-imagining of 'The Marriage Of Figaro', which was staged at the International Festival back in 2015. Now he's back with a daring personal vision of 'Don Giovanni', which presents the world the opera is set in through the eyes of the titular character - a dangerous, erotic place. It will be a dark and provocative staging of an already pretty dark classic.

#### La Damnation de Faust | Usher Hall | 20 Aug

"Dancing skeletons, drunken rats and a wild, reckless ride to damnation: just some of the unforgettable evocations in Berlioz's visionary and epic musical retelling of the Faust legend". Another dark theme, but this time a choral extravaganza inspired by Goethe's dramatic poem about the notorious soul-seller, performed by a startlingly good line up.

#### Concerto a Tempo d'Umore | Assembly Rooms | 3-27 Aug

A concert for the whole family offering something of a lighter take on the whole classical music thing, as it combines mime and audience participation with a soundtrack including well-known pieces from famous composers such as Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert,



Chopin, Strauss and Brahms. Presented by Orquestra de Cambra de l'Empordà, an orchestra of twelve string musicians from Spain.

## MUSICALS

### THREE NEW MUSICALS

#### Six | Sweet Grassmarket | 3-27 Aug

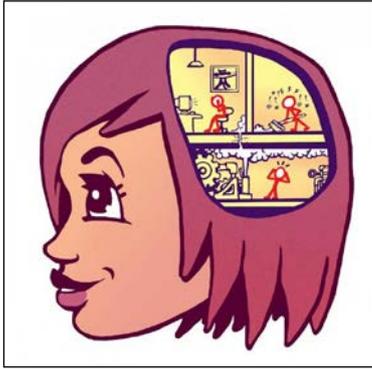
So many musicals that make it to edfringe are the sort that we've seen over and over again, so it makes us very happy when people go to the effort of staging nice new ones. This has a double appeal (well, for me at least, because I like history) because it brings together Henry VIII's six long suffering wives to perform as a world famous girl band. "divorced, beheaded, live in concert!". Hurrah.

#### Atlantic: A Scottish Story + Atlantic: America And The Great War | Assembly Hall | 3-27 Aug

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland always brings great stuff to the Festival and I will wager that this year will be no exception. This year's offerings involve collaboration with American Music Theatre Project at Northwestern University in Chicago, and two related productions with a transatlantic theme. I'm expecting them both to be super.

## A Super Happy Story (About Feeling Super Sad) | Pleasance Courtyard | 2-28 Aug

"Sally's a happy person. She doesn't let little things get her down and almost never cries. But she's got an illness. It makes her feel like she isn't the person she wants to be... But she doesn't



want anyone to know about it." The excellent Jon Brittain is the creative brain behind this show, which features music by the brilliant Matthew Floyd Jones and mixes storytelling, live music and sketch comedy.

## THREE UNUSUAL MUSICALS

### Sasquatch The Opera | Summerhall | 2-27 Aug

When I began this section on unusual musicals, I did start to wonder if other people will actually find the themes of these shows as unusual as I do. But surely this counts: it's about a hillbilly family who make a living selling the story of Sasquatch to willing tourists, and what happens when they discover the real thing. What's more, it's "It's weird and provocative and totally twisted kid friendly." Which is great.

### A Waste Land | Laughing Horse @ Moriarty's | 3-20 Aug

TS Eliot's poem 'The Wasteland' is one of my favourite things ever, but I didn't ever imagine a day when it would turn up as a part rave, part multimedia installation in the musicals and opera section of the Fringe programme. So I am rather intrigued by this, and its threat of a dark, dystopian journey with genderqueer Tiresias, created by Brooklyn based playwright and performance artist Eri Borlaug.

### Heartwood | Venue 13 | 5-26 Aug

I suppose this is only unusual because it's got puppets in it, and while there are puppets all over the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, they are more often involved in theatre than in musicals. It sounds like this has an interesting story as well, though: a small girl wakes within a dark and mysterious forest and must make her way through the wood, on the run from from a persistent, haunting spirit. Promises to be quite eerie and spine-chilling.

## SPOKEN WORD

### THREE SPOKEN WORD SHOWS

#### Rob Auton - The Hair Show | Just The Tonic at The Caves | 3-26 Aug

Rob Auton is actually listed in comedy, but his style is very much a spoken word one, so he fits here. He also very much fits in the sense that he is an absolute favourite of the ThreeWeeks team, and has earned so much glowing praise from us I'm surprised his ears aren't constantly burning. He has an interesting approach to his topics, and this time it's the turn of hair, and is, therefore, "suitable for people who have, or have had hair and hairs". Ha.

#### Neil Hilborn - Live Poetry | The Stand Comedy Club 3 & 4 and New Town Theatre | 9-27 Aug

He's famous for poems like 'OCD', 'Joey' and 'The Future' and is the author of a book called 'Our Numbered Days', and it may be his Edinburgh debut, but US poet Neil Hilborn probably already known to many of you, thanks to his super-huge hit rate on YouTube. If you're aware of him, you'll probably want to just go ahead and book those tickets. If you're not, take a look at his online presence, then decide.

#### The Naked Dietitian | Quaker Meeting House | 14-26 Aug

Acclaimed performance poet and radical dietitian (she believes we need to make fundamental changes in how we talk about lifestyle, health and justice) Lucy Aphramor addresses topics such as clean eating, identity, privilege, queerness, community, and resilience in what's described as a "viscerally, spiritually, intellectually and emotionally compelling refusal to sign-up to a post-truth whitewash". Expect something very interesting.

## THEATRE

### THREE THEATRE SHOWS WITH MUSIC

#### Daniel Cainer: More Gefilte Fish And Chips | Underbelly George Square | 2-28 Aug

The delightful human being and Fringe fixture that is Daniel Cainer returns once more to the fray, bringing more of his clever, funny and often poignant self-penned story-songs. He's made many fans from our review teams over the years, and been a recipient of one of our Editors' Awards for that reason. No previous knowledge of Gefilte Fish is required, so please don't miss him, he's a real treat.

#### Woke | Gilded Balloon Teviot | 4-28 Aug

A timely piece inspired by the US civil rights movement and focusing on the lives of two separate women, forty two years apart: one is a black panther, the other a present day university student and both choose to challenge the American justice system. This is the latest work from the talented Apphia Campbell, who Fringe-goers may remember as the creator of Nina Simone inspired one woman show 'Black Is The Colour Of My Voice'.

#### Gunshot Medley | Venue 13 | 5-26 Aug

And another timely play looking at black lives in America, but you can't

have too many at a time like this, in my opinion. Dionna Michelle Daniel weaves together generations of stories through poetry and song in response to the insensitive usage of the Confederate flag following the horrendous Charleston church massacre. #blacklivesmatter

### THREE SETS OF CURSED THEATRE

#### Curse Of The Mummy | Just The Tonic At The Caves | 3-26 Aug

The team behind this show - Last Chance Saloon - have provoked a couple of glowing reviews from our writing staff in the past, for their

hilarious takes on the Dracula and Frankenstein stories. Now they turn their attention to the subject of mummies, and I, for one, am entirely delighted. Expect Indiana Jones-style shenanigans and a lot of laughter.

#### The Cat Man Curse | Bedlam Theatre | 2-28 Aug

This is described as a "whirlwind comedy", and blends sketch, clowning and physical theatre to tell the tale of TV actor Charles Heron (famous for playing hotshot lawyer Harvey Hardtruth), who is struck by an old Hollywood curse, and ends up being thrown into a kaleidoscopic 1970s noir investigation, forming a partnership with his solicitor to get to the bottom of a bizarre mystery.



## YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH THE INFALLIBLES

THE PRINCIPLE OF UNCERTAINTY - SWEET Holyrood - Venue 94 7pm

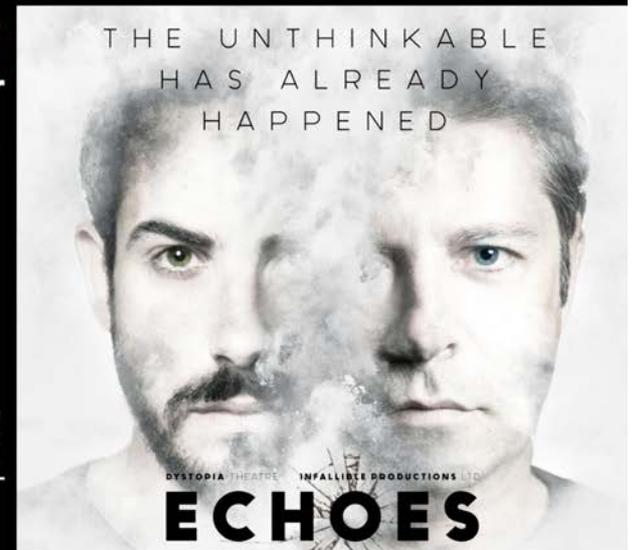
ECHOES - ZOO venues - Monkey House 7pm

LOSING IT! - ZOO venues - The Aviary 8.25pm

THE SWEET SCIENCE - C too - Venue 4 5.50pm



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# THREE TO SEE

WE RECOMMEND SHOWS FOR YOU TO SEE

The Divide 1 and 2



## Curse Of Cranholme Abbey | Pleasance Courtyard | 4-19 Aug

"Doors creak and dust falls; the Curse of Cranholme Abbey has awoken once more. Distant screams echo from the east wing. The clock ticks. Time stands still. Peeling back the wallpaper, our heroes unravel the Abbey's terrible secrets as the curse threatens to destroy them all." The reliably good Young Pleasance present a tale of intrigue and horror that's definitely going on my to-see list.

## THREE SOLO SHOWS

### Pike St | Roundabout @ Summerhall | 4-27 Aug

Award winning New York based performer Nilaja Sun is the creative force behind 'Pike St', a solo show featuring a number of different characters from the Lower East Side, primarily Evelyn, who is welcoming her Navy SEAL brother home, keeping her eccentric father out of trouble and providing electricity for her daughter on life-support. Don't miss this chance to see this accomplished performer in action.

### Venus and Adonis | C primo | 2-28 Aug

Shakespeare's narrative poem, the bard's best selling first published work, tells the story of the attempts of Venus, goddess of love, to seduce the young and beautiful Adonis who, frankly, would rather go hunting. Here

it's been reimagined by Christopher Hunter as a one man play that explores "what lies behind a tale of rejected lust played out against the highest stakes". Sounds very promising.

### The Shape Of The Pain | Summerhall | 2-26 Aug

The team behind this have won much acclaim and a Fringe First, so the probability of this being utterly brilliant is obviously very high. It's about a woman who suffers from chronic pain, her attempts to



articulate her experiences, and her attempts to proceed with a normal life. Don't expect it to be depressing, there's hope on the horizon, and it's tackling an issue that actually affects an awful lot of people, so it will be interesting to observe this company's insights.

## THREE HELPINGS OF DYSTOPIAN THEATRE

### Under My Thumb | Assembly Roxy | 3-20 Aug

I think dystopian themes are all the rage at the moment (yes, I did use the phrase "all the rage" like an aged parent, possibly because I am one) and I am pretty sure that's because of things like Donald Trump being president of America and everyone worrying about how that's all going to end. So, I think some dystopian theatrics are in order, starting with this, which tells the story of five women in an alternative present, imprisoned for crimes against society.

### The Divide 1 and 2 | King's Theatre | 8-20 Aug

"A century from now England is hit by a deadly contagion. Society is decimated as contact between men and women becomes fatal. Under the dictates of an elusive Preacher, an unthinkable solution is enforced. Separated by the Divide, the adult survivors are segregated by gender with men wearing white as a mark of their purity and women - still infected - clothed in black as a sign of their sin." This new work by Alan Ayckbourn is told through two instalments, and looks extraordinary.

### Play On Words | C royale | 2-28 Aug

Most dystopian stuff tends to be

quite serious, but 'Play On Words' is a comedy, which is nice. It focuses on the daily routine of two lexicographers - Harper and Collins - who survive on a diet of alphabet soup and, imprisoned by a sinister organisation, struggle to reach their daily word quota under the constant threat of death. Argh.

## THREE LOTS OF QUIRKY THEATRE

### #instalove | theSpace on North Bridge | 4-26 Aug

You get a different performance every night with this one-woman show from American Catherine Duquette, who turns the process of looking for love into a live game-show type format. The interactive style means that the audience are very much involved, helping to decide what happens on stage, and getting involved in the



emotional consequences of their choices. A celebration of all the reasons we seek love and why we seek the partners we do, Inspired by cynicism and based on romance.

### Nikola And His Travelling Lux Concordia | C royale | 2-28 Aug

This show had me at the words "Psychedelic trip meets TED talk", and the fact that it's got a scientific theme. Ola the time traveller and Nikola, a modern scientist, fight for the audience's support for philosophies of science and spirituality in a performance that explores the kind of subjects you find on the fringes of modern science. We are rather intrigued.

### Seagulls | The Leith Volcano | 8-26 Aug

This one is quirky because of the staging: this version of Chekhov's 'The Seagull' is performed in a decaying church, and the show's cast climb walls and swing on ropes, dance, play

games, get wet and fight duels. The play is of course a classic, and this adaptation looks amazing.

## VISUAL ART

## THREE PROMISING EXHIBITIONS

### Shannon Te Ao - With The Sun Aglow | I Have My Pensive Moods | Gladstone Court | 27 Jul-27 Aug

Prize winning artist Shannon Te Ao is known for video installations, sound works and live performances which often draw on existing literary material, in particular Māori lyrical sources found in Māori proverbs and song. This multimedia installation explores the physical and emotional depths of love, grief, sickness and healing and centres on video footage shot in a variety of New Zealand locations.

### Jacob Kerray | Talbot Rice Gallery | 28 Jul-30 Sep

The Talbot Rice Gallery has commissioned this exhibition from Jacob Kerray, inviting the artist to respond to the University of Edinburgh's vast Art Collection to create a new work, or series of works, for the Talbot Rice Round Room. Kerray's work focuses on the visual representation of his own interests - particularly football, pro wrestling and historical painting, examining the hierarchies of culture, social distraction, mob mentality, myth, belief and taste. Detailed, colourful, fascinating work.

### True To Life - British Realist Painting in the 1920s and 1930s | Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art | until 24 Sep

I am not sure it would even be the festival if I didn't at some point tell all our readers that the Scottish National Gallery of Modern art is definitely worth a visit. This exhibition looks fabulous, more than 80 paintings by an almost forgotten generation of artists, and offers a chance to discover a remarkable of art borrowed from public and private UK collections. Lovely.

## GET MORE

Get more Threes To See everyday of the Edinburgh Festival at [threeweeksinburgh.com](http://threeweeksinburgh.com)

Get Three To See recommendations all year round in London at [thisweeklondon.com](http://thisweeklondon.com)

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## All about ThreeWeeks Edinburgh

**ThreeWeeks has been covering the Edinburgh Festival since 1996 - so this is our 22nd year covering the world's largest cultural event.**

### CHECK OUT OUR COVERAGE

We will be previewing, reviewing and interviewing at all of Edinburgh's summer festivals: the Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Edinburgh Art Festival and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

**Interviews:** We will be interviewing many of our favourite performers with new Q&As going live every day of the festival month. The interviews are conducted by our two Editors - Caro Moses and Chris Cooke.

**Three To See Previews:** Caro also recommends 75 shows to see at the festival in this preview magazine, plus look out for more Three To See show recommendations throughout August in the TW Daily.

**Reviews:** The ThreeWeeks review team will be out there reviewing from the first day of Fringe previews, with a daily helping of reviews coming out from the first weekend of the Festival.

### WHERE YOU CAN ACCESS OUR COVERAGE

There will be two editions of the popular TW Magazine this year.

This **Preview Edition** packed with interviews and show recommendations, available to pick up as all the Fringe venues open and delivered direct to the door of thousands of Edinburgh households.

The **Review Edition** will be packed with interviews and reviews and will be available from mid-August. You can pick up a copy from all the key Festival venues, plus cafes and bars around central Edinburgh.

To get all the latest coverage, sign up to the **TW Daily bulletin**, which will land in your inbox daily throughout the festival month. Inside you will find all the latest interviews and Three To See show recommendations.

There will also be a series of special Edinburgh editions of our **TW:TALKS** podcast over the summer months, with co-Editor Chris Cooke chatting to some great performers. Sign up to TW:TALKS at [thisweektalks.com](http://thisweektalks.com) to receive every edition of the podcast as it goes live.

All our coverage is also accessible via the ThreeWeeks website at [threeweeksedinburgh.com](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com)

### GET COVERED!

We try to feature as many shows and performers as we possibly can each year, covering all the genres, with big name acts and companies alongside the very newest talent and alternative shows and performers.

For information on how to

make sure you are on the radar of Editor Caro Moses, go to [threeweeksedinburgh.com/getcovered](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com/getcovered)

### SELL MORE TICKETS - ADVERTISE WITH THREEWEEKS

Advertising with ThreeWeeks is a simple way to put your show and your name in front of thousands of ticket-buyers and all the key opinion formers and decision makers at the Edinburgh Festival.

And we have packages to suit all budgets.

For details of how you can advertise in the TW Magazine and TW Daily bulletin go to [threeweeksedinburgh.com/advertising](http://threeweeksedinburgh.com/advertising).

Remember, we operate ThreeWeeks Edinburgh as a not-for-profit venture - all monies generated through advertising helps us extend our coverage.

### THISWEEK LONDON

ThreeWeeks Edinburgh is the sister magazine to ThisWeek London. We recommend Three To See in London every day of the year, plus check out more Caro Meets interviews and the TW:TALKS podcast.

Access it all at [thisweeklondon.com](http://thisweeklondon.com) and sign up for the year-round TW Weekly bulletin.

## ThreeWeeks Edinburgh

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**SELL-OUT SHOW** Busan One Asia Festival 2016  
**SELL-OUT SHOW** Busan Cinema Center 2017

**"Perfect representation of monkey movement"**  
*International News of Korea*

**"Seeking the meaning of language without language"**  
*United News*

**"The numbers, movements and acrobatics; Fantastic combination"**  
*Culture News*

**"Meet the fresh new performance"**  
*Busan Daily News*

# MONKEY DANCE

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"A SEXY CEREBRAL TWIST TO COMEDY" ★★★★★ OUTINPERTH (AUS)

★★★★★ BROADWAY BABY (UK)

★★★★★ FUNNY TONNE (AUS)

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★★★★★ BROADWAY BABY (UK)

★★★★★ FUNNY TONNE (AUS)

10.00PM 2ND - 28TH AUG (NOT 14TH)

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