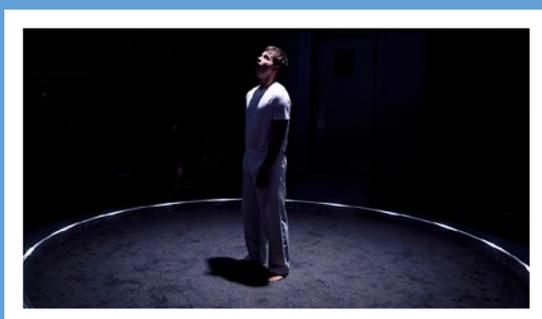
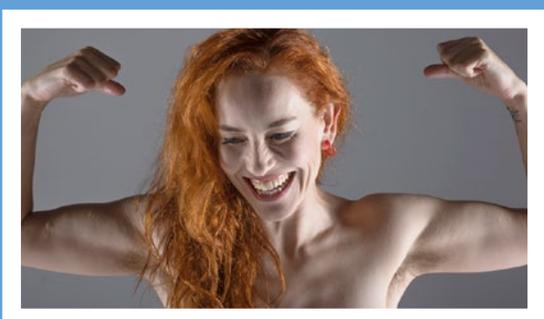
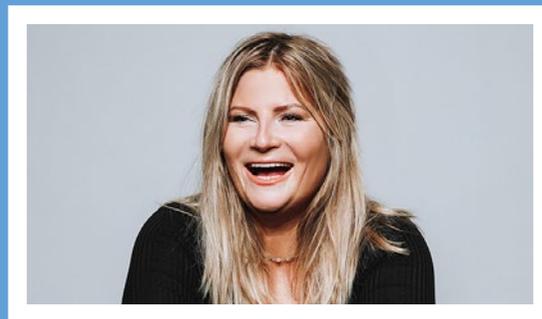
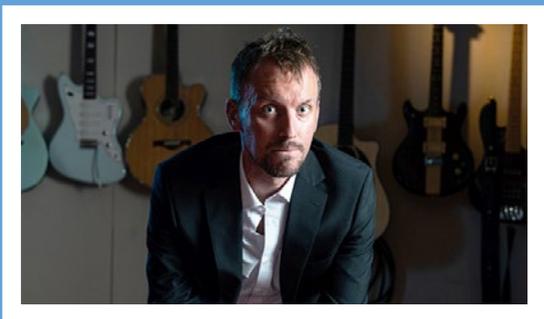


# ThreeWeeks

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# EDINBURGH FESTIVAL PREVIEW GUIDE

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INTERVIEWS AND SHOW RECOMMENDATIONS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE FESTIVAL

# Seabright productions

**TRANSPOTTING LIVE**



**'THE BEST WAY TO EXPERIENCE TRANSPOTTING.'**  
Irvine Welsh



**WARNING:**

- Performance contains nudity
- Very strong language
- Violence & sexual references
- Heavy drug/needle use
- Suitable for ages 16+

By Irvine Welsh  
Adapted by Harry Gibson  
Directed by Adam Spreadbury-Maher  
with Greg Eplin and Ben Anderson

4-28 AUG (not 10, 17, 22)  
18:00 and 21:00  
Pleasance.co.uk / transpottinglive.com



James Seabright and Play the Spotlight present

## BLACK IS THE COLOR OF MY VOICE

Inspired by the life of Nina Simone  
written and performed by Apphia Campbell

★★★★★  
'Nothing short of sensational'  
Breakaway Radio

★★★★★  
'Moving portrayal of determination and survival'  
Times

4-20 AUG (not 10, 17) 15:00  
Pleasance.co.uk / bitcomv.com



JAMES SEABRIGHT PRESENTS CLOWNFISH THEATRE IN



## ATTENBOROUGH AND HIS ANIMALS

★★★★★  
"SURPRISING... DELIGHTFUL... BRILLIANT."  
ADELAIDE ADVERTISER

2021 WINNER

15:30  
4 - 21 AUG 2022 (not 10, 17)




FRANKIE FOR JONATHAN MAITLAND'S THE LAST TEMPTATION OF BOSS JOHNSON

★★★★★  
'ENDLESSLY WATCHABLE PERFORMANCE.'  
DAILY MAIL

★★★★★  
'ACHINGLY FUNNY BLACK COMEDY.'  
WEST END WILMA

## BORIS LIVE at Five

by JONATHAN MAITLAND  
Performed by WILL BARTON  
Directed by DUGALD BRUCE-LOCKHART

17:00  
4 - 28 AUG 2022 (not 10 / 17 / 24)




JAMES SEABRIGHT PRESENTS

## WILL PICKVANCE HALF MAN HALF PIANO



EDITORS AWARD WINNER THREE WEEKS  
'A SINGULAR BLEND OF VIRTUOSITY AND HUMOUR' THE LIST

19:25  
3 - 28 AUG

assembly GEORGE SQUARE

assemblyfestival.com  
@AssemblyFest 0131 623 3030



JAMES SEABRIGHT PRESENTS

SEVENTY MINUTES SEVEN SEASONS ONE SPIKE

## Buffy Revamped

"BRENDAN MURPHY IS RIOTOUSLY FUNNY"  
THREE WEEKS

19:30  
4-20 & 27-29 Aug (not 10, 17)

pleasance.co.uk  
buffyrevamped.co.uk



James Seabright presents

## ARTHUR BOSTROM (Allo Allo!) in the new murder mystery

### Are You Being MURDERED?

By DAVID SEMPLE  
Directed by JAMES CALLAS BALL

4-20 AUGUST  
12:00 (not 10, 17)  
13:30 (not 10, 17)

pleasance.co.uk 0131 556 6550



James Seabright in association with Northbank Speakers presents

## IAIN DALE ALL TALK

Extra Show with NICOLA STURGEON 10 Aug 12:00

DAILY SHOWS GUEST SCHEDULE

6 - 9 AUGUST, 13:30

- 6 AUG DIANE ABBOTT
- 7 AUG RUTH DAVIDSON
- 8 AUG RORY BREMER
- 9 AUG MARY BEARD

6 - 14 AUGUST, 16:30

- 6 AUG RORY STEWART
- 7 AUG MADINE DORRIES
- 8 AUG ANGELA RAYNER
- 9 AUG OWEN JONES AND ASH SARKAR
- 10 AUG JEREMY CORBYN
- 11 AUG TIM RICE
- 12 AUG KEIR STARMER
- 13 AUG DAVID STARKEY
- 14 AUG JESS PHILLIPS

Iain also appears in For The Many Live with Jacqui Smith

pleasance.co.uk iaindalealltalk.com @IainDaleAllTalk



IAIN DALE & JACQUI SMITH'S HIT PODCAST GOES LIVE WITH DAILY GUESTS

## FOR THE MANY LIVE



10 - 14 AUG 12:30  
PLEASANCE GEORGE SQUARE  
PLEASANCE.CO.UK FORTHEMANY.LIVE

10-12 AUG PJ Oliver & Julie Garvey  
13 AUG Douglas Ross & Anas Sarwar  
14 AUG James McAvoy, Gertie Miller, Geoff Norcott



JAMES SEABRIGHT PRESENTS SAM DUGMORE IN

## MANBO

"A WHOLE LOT OF CAMP AND EVERY BIT ENTERTAINING" FORTNIGHT

★★★★★ THE ADVERTISER ★★★★★ GLAM ADELAIDE  
★★★★★ THE DAILY MAIL ★★★★★ SEE-NO-EYE-REVIEW ★★★★★ THE CLOTHESLINE

17:45  
4 - 29 AUG 2022 (not 10/17/24) 16:00 (not 10/17/24)

GILDED BALLOON  
0131 623 6552  
GILDEDBALLOON.CO.UK



NEW YORK • LAS VEGAS • FRINGE '22!

## SEX TIPS

for STRAIGHT WOMEN from a GAY MAN



"A LAUGH-OUT-LOUD and WILD SHOW!"  
★★★★★  
- Las Vegas Review Journal

5 - 28 AUG (not 10 / 17 / 24) 21:30

GILDED BALLOON  
0131 623 6552  
GILDEDBALLOON.CO.UK SexTipsPlay.com



JAMES SEABRIGHT PRESENTS



## YIPPEE KI YAY

AN ACHINGLY FUNNY RHYMING RETELLING OF DIE HARD

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY RICHARD MARSH  
DIRECTED BY HAL CHAMBERS

3-29 AUG (NOT 10, 17, 24) 14:35

GILDED BALLOON  
0131 623 6552  
GILDEDBALLOON.CO.UK




[www.seabright.org/edfringe](http://www.seabright.org/edfringe)



# HELLO THERE

Here we go again everybody, the Edinburgh Festival – the world’s biggest cultural event – is back in full effect once more, with three weeks of great theatre, comedy, cabaret, music, musicals, opera, dance, physical theatre, film, visual art, talks, debates and spoken word.

The Edinburgh Festival is actually a number of different festivals that all take place across the Scottish capital during three weeks in August. That includes the Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh International Book Festival, the Edinburgh International Film Festival, the Edinburgh Art Festival, the Festival Of Politics, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo, and the massive and magnificent Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

ThreeWeeks has been covering the Edinburgh Festival every year since 1996. We’re here to help you navigate the thousands of shows on offer during the Festival month, both in this special Preview Guide, and via our website and email bulletins. Our coverage includes...

## EDINBURGH FESTIVAL THREES TO SEE

Every year ThreeWeeks Co-Editor Caro Moses compiles her Three To See show recommendations, tipping a diverse mix of shows from across Edinburgh’s festivals. Tapping into our more than 25 years of experience covering the Festival – and our year-round championing of the best in fringe culture – you’ll find 81 great shows tipped this year. Read the Three To See tips from page 16.

## EDINBURGH FESTIVAL INTERVIEWS

Every August we chat to numerous performers, producers, writers and directors who are involved in shows at the Edinburgh Festival. We’re keen to find out more about their latest productions, their creative process, their careers to date, and their experiences of the Edinburgh Fringe. Check out twelve interviews in this Preview Guide and many, many more at [ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com](http://ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com).

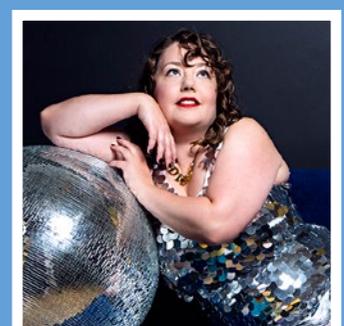
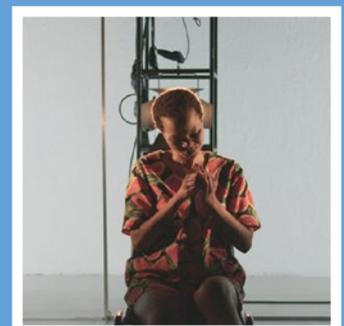
## EDINBURGH FESTIVAL REVIEWS

The ThreeWeeks review team will be out and about around Edinburgh again this month checking out shows from across the Festival. You’ll be able to access all the latest reviews every day on [ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com](http://ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com) – plus we’ll be publishing a special TW Edinburgh email bulletin every Thursday collating all that week’s reviews – sign up at [ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com/signup](http://ThreeWeeksEdinburgh.com/signup).

## AND THERE’S MORE...

The TW team champion the best in fringe theatre, comedy and culture all year round via the [ThisWeekCulture.com](http://ThisWeekCulture.com) website and TW Weekly email bulletin. We publish Three To See recommendations every Monday for great shows happening in London, online and beyond, plus ThreeWeeks co-Editor Caro Moses chats with the people behind some of our favourite productions. To get the weekly TW round up make sure you sign up at [ThisWeekCulture.com/signup](http://ThisWeekCulture.com/signup)

The TW team are launching a brand new programme this summer to support the Fringe community and those embarking on a career in theatre, comedy or the wider cultural industries. There will be regular TW Backstage podcasts and blog posts to check out, plus panel discussions with key people from across the Fringe community. Find out more about all things TW Backstage on page 23.



Meet the people behind twelve great shows happening at this year's Festival – plus go online for even more interviews...



## Julia Masli: CHOOSH!

Anyone who has been to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe will know that one of its greatest delights is the sheer variety of culture on offer, but those whose edfringe experience is limited could be forgiven for thinking that it's all stand-up comedy and productions of Shakespeare. Of course there is lots of great stand-up and some very interesting takes on Shakespeare, and some of our interviewees are presenting such shows.

However, while we are kicking off with a comedy show, it's not stand-up, but that somewhat rarer breed of edfringe entertainer: the clown. And it's someone with a really good story to tell via their medium.

Acclaimed Estonia-born clown Julia Masli, visiting teacher at the Ecole Philippe Gaulier theatre school in France, heads to Assembly Roxy this summer with 'CHOOSH!', a fab sounding show about a migrant clown who leaves an Eastern European village and travels to the United States. We spoke to Julia to find out more.

**Can you start by telling us a bit about the genre and nature of 'CHOOSH!' – what sort of show should audiences expect?**

'CHOOSH!' is a clown show tracing a migrant's journey through absurd routines and surreal physical comedy. Be prepared for serious belly laughs! And expect snow on your head!

**Does the show tell a story? What inspired this subject matter?**

Well, a hungry clown from an

Eastern European village travels to America for a hot dog. It's a clown homage to migration. I'm originally from Estonia but moved to the UK. I've often felt like a bit of an idiot here in the UK, trying my best to fit in and imitate the British people so they would accept me and be friends with me. So this felt like a good starting point for a clown show. The story is also inspired by my Grandfather, Grisha. He left a life of poverty in his village in Belarus aged sixteen and travelled to Estonia to find work. The dramaturg I work with, Annie

Siddons, suggested we should travel to America in the show instead, to make the story relatable to the audiences here.

**Can you explain the title? Why did you give it this name?**

The title 'CHOOSH!' means bullshit. I gave it this title because it's a clown show that is full of delightful nonsense and complete bullshit that the idiot/clown thinks is genius. It's also the bullshit facing migrants and women that occasionally seeps through the piece. But the show

is carried by the great optimism of a joyous idiot!

**You've performed at the Fringe before, of course. What keeps you coming back to it?**

Yes! With our show 'LEGS' in 2019, an hour long show about legs. My legs are the ones keeping me coming back! They are walking me in that direction and I can't stop them! HEEEEELP!

**What's your favourite thing, and your least favourite thing, about performing at the Festival?**

My favourite thing is being around some of the funniest people, like The Duncan Brothers, who can make me pee my trousers with laughter. My least favourite thing is carrying around 30kg of props, and wishing I could write jokes and do stand-up.

**What are you doing right now, ahead of the kick off of the Fringe? What are you currently working on?**

I'm now in France, teaching movement at Ecole Philippe Gaulier during 'Le Jeu' – which is a summer course. 'Le Jeu' means Game in French. I also sit in on Philippe Gaulier's classes while I'm here and am reminded of the standard required to be on the stage. So it's a good wake up call to not get complacent. I'm also teaching a clown workshop for the amazing organisation Women For Refugee Women at Southbank Centre. And

I'm also previewing 'CHOOSH!' around town.

**Let's rewind a bit now and talk about the past? Did you always want to be a performer? How did your career begin?**

Yes! It began the day I walked for the first time and learnt to say the word 'Legs'.

**What have been the highlights of your career thus far?**

Highlights have been doing our show 'Legs' – a show about legs – with The Duncan Brothers at Soho Theatre, and performing its sequel 'Logs', a show about logs. Especially good was rehearsing in the forest, looking for logs for our show about logs there, and speaking to trees as research and thinking "this is our job today!"

**What's coming up next for you after this?**

Hopefully some quality family and friends time. Work related: an exciting circus project in Finland, touring 'CHOOSH!', teaching at Gaulier, hosting my bouffon night 'Comedy From Hell', and teaching clown workshops. Acting and more clowning.

**Julia Masli performs 'CHOOSH!' at Assembly Roxy from 3-28 Aug.**



**READ MORE FROM JULIA ONLINE AT:**  
threeweeks  
edinburgh.com/  
2022juliamasli

## Tom Ward: Anthem

Comedian Tom Ward returns to Edinburgh this year with a brand new show, and a much celebrated 'Live At The Apollo' debut behind him, so - naturally - we are all expecting rather good - and typically offbeat and whimsical - things.

If you've somehow managed to miss his work so far, let us fill you in a bit on his achievements of the last few years: he's done three critically acclaimed solo shows at the Fringe, won the Best Newcomer gong at the 2017 Chortle Awards, and supported the likes of Jack Whitehall, Joe Lycett, Jason Manford and Sindhu Vee on tour.

We wanted to talk to Tom about what we can expect from this year's show 'Anthem', how he feels about the Fringe, and his hopes for the future, so we arranged a quick chat to find out more.

**Can you start by telling us a bit about the content of your Edinburgh show? What themes can we expect to see you focusing on?**

Well it seems to be about love, class and mental health mainly, and all the stuff that goes with those juicy little numbers - sex, loss, identity, getting older... and some climate stuff too, though not too much, cos that just makes me want to cry, which isn't the show I'm going for.

**Why did you want to focus on these particular themes?**

I've always been partial to a bit of love, have battled with the black dog - and its various other animal friends - since 1992, and think class fills a hilarious amount of disk space in this country so it's fun to prod at. Plus the climate has to be mentioned otherwise you look psychotic.

**How do you go about putting together an hour long show? What's the creative process like?**

Oh god, just gigs gigs gigs, day after day trawling through notes, chatting to mates, chatting to my girlfriend, doubting the whole thing, feeling amazing about the whole thing, and just willing August to start so I can't worry any more.

**When did you last perform in Edinburgh? What made you want to come back?**

2018. It was more of a psychiatric episode than a Fringe. So I guess I'd like to put that to bed and prove to myself that I am able to live within the bizarre bubble of narcissism and collective angst for 27 days.

**Ah yes, doing the Fringe can be quite tough, can't it? It's a long haul. How does performing at it compare to performing the rest of the year?**

The rest of the year is WAY MORE FUN. Edinburgh is essentially the high altitude training you do to build your fitness. Any pleasure is soon followed by total agony, so you start to doubt anything you feel, and spend the whole time furious at other people's success and convinced that there's a conspiracy. The rest of the year is the garden of fucking Eden by comparison.

**Can we delve into your history a bit, now? How did you end up going into stand-up comedy? Did you always want to perform?**

I was a singer first in a post-punk band called Church Of The Drive Thru Elvis - catchy I know! - but that didn't work out. Partly cos the band kicked me out. Then I did some open mic comedy gigs and went from there... very very slowly.

**Were the comedy competitions you did, and the Chortle Award, helpful in**



**advancing your career, do you think?**

It's hard to know what causes what, but it gave me massive confidence, and with the Chortle Award being audience voted it made me feel really supported, which can never be a bad thing can it?

**What aims/hopes/ambitions do you have for the future?**

To do Apollo again! Also to go on tour and combine my love of comedy and charity shops somewhere.

**Aside from performing, what are you most looking forward to doing in Edinburgh this summer?**

Endless party nights in bars; lofts; gardens; hangovers; swims. Smooching my girlfriend on a bench late at night.

**Tom Ward performs 'Anthem' at Monkey Barrel Comedy from 3-28 Aug.**



**READ MORE FROM TOM ONLINE AT:**

threeweeks  
edinburgh.com/  
2022tomward

BOUND & GARNERED COMEDY PRESENTS

# ROBYN PERKINS

## MILLION DOLLAR MAYBE

CAN YOU PROVE ANYTHING?

★★★★★ Chortle  
★★★★★ Fringe Biscuit  
★★★★★ Glam Adelaide  
★★★★★ EdFest  
★★★★★ Express Magazine

SYDNEY FRINGE FESTIVAL 2019  
BEST IN COMEDY  
WINNER

**GILDED BALLOON** 0131 622 6552 GILDEDBALLOON.CO.UK **5.00PM**

3 - 28 AUG (NOT 15)  
GILDED BALLOON TEVIOT - BILLIARD ROOM

## Tom GK: How To Record The Greatest Album Of All Time



As you'll all surely know, there are so many comedy shows at the average edfringe that it would be impossible to see and appreciate all of them. So when it comes to coverage, we are always looking out for stuff that piques our interest with intriguing themes.

One that jumped out at us this year is 'How To Record The Greatest Album Of All Time', by Tom GK, whose Edinburgh Festival work you may have already come across in recent years, in particular 'Hearing Loss: The Musical' at the 2018 Fringe. A former music critic who changed course as a result of hearing loss, he's back this year with another show with a musical theme.

We arranged a chat with Tom, to find out more about the show and the man himself.

**So, tell us a bit about the content of 'How To Record The Greatest Album of All Time'? I mean, presumably it's about how to record the greatest album of all time, but can you tell us a bit more than that?**

So, the headline would probably be: "Former Telegraph music critic goes deaf, says 'screw that' and decides to make one of the greatest albums ever". The show really is an audition tape where I

have 50 minutes to prove myself worthy of outdoing 'Abbey Road', 'Songs In The Key Of Life' and all the other amazing albums out there. It isn't really musical comedy at all, it's just taking this rich pool of love and positivity that is music and using it to build a comedy show. While having hearing loss.

**What made you decide to do a show about this subject?**

Comedy seemed like a distant

memory for the two years of lockdown, particularly as I was shielding for much of it. So, instead I decided to pick up my guitar and put that energy into writing music. What came out of that are all the ingredients for one of the greatest albums of all time... and, thankfully, a comedy show too.

**How did you go about creating the show? Can you tell us a bit about the process of putting it together?**

It's a two-step process. Have you ever been hanging out with someone playing a guitar or a piano when they suddenly play something you recognise? It's delightful, you giggle - and that's step one. My job, in step two, is to put rocket boosters under that 'giggle' and turn it into a full-blown 'laugh'.

**You've always loved music presumably? Has it always been a part of your life?**

Definitely. I remember as a kid when I got into trouble, didn't do my homework or whenever anything bad happened, I had a mantra: "Tom, there'll always be the 'White Album'". Your heart might ache, your leg might break, but no one will ever take 'Rocky Raccoon' away.

**Losing your hearing must have had an obvious impact**

**on your relationship with music. Can you explain how it continues despite that?**

Yes, losing my hearing was a bit of a bummer - maybe 'Rocky Raccoon' isn't forever, after all. Thanks to a genetic condition I now have no hearing on my left side and it's also quite reduced on my right side too - take that hecklers! Medicine is doing a great job of protecting the rest of my hearing... for now, at least. Yet, it has made me value music like never before... every bass-line, solo, harmony and genre. If anything, I'm more addicted to this weird cosmic realm we call 'music' than ever.

**Can you tell us a bit about your past, now? Did you see yourself ending up as a performer like this? Back then, what did you want to do when you grew up?**

Haha, "how did you end up like this" is a question most comedians get asked pretty often... especially at family get-togethers. Performing was always something bubbling under in my life but comedy really took over after I lost my hearing. That's a pretty isolating, tough thing to happen - especially for a jobbing music writer - but comedy allowed me to get up on stage, have a voice and build back that self esteem I'd lost. Being funny is a pretty great superpower.

**What have been the highlights of your career thus far?**

A support slot for Stewart Lee at an Action On Hearing Loss fund-raiser stands out, as does performing with an impromptu BSL interpreter which turned into the most chaotic but joyful show ever. As for my life as a music critic, my main lasting legacy is being quoted on the Wikipedia pages of Britney Spears and Bruno Mars... that's the benefit of giving people nice reviews.

**What aims and ambitions do you have for the future?**

Keep hearing, keep making people laugh and - yes - record the greatest album of all time. At one time I would have given you a long list - write an era-defining sketch show, become a 'Just A Minute' panellist, be elected MP for Milton Keynes North - but age and wisdom - perhaps? - means I'm actually just in love with the

process of evolving and perfecting my comedy. Do that and all the cool stuff follows.

**You've been to the Fringe before, of course. What makes you want to go back to it?**

Oh, it's going to be so good to be back and I just can't wait to get in front of some of the best audiences in the world. These crowds are comedy literate but on-the-look-out for something a bit different and the next big thing. You don't really get that anywhere else

**What are your most favourite things about the Fringe and your least favourite things?**

The best thing about the Fringe is what it represents. Edinburgh is one of the world's best capital cities but for August it gets this amazing village feel where performers and audiences come together to do and see crazy, brilliant, hilarious things in an atmosphere where we all have each other's back. It's like Davos but for likeable people. The worst thing is probably the silent disco, to be honest. There's 50 people dancing around the street, admittedly having a lot of fun, when what they should be doing is going to all the amazing comedy, theatre and music shows put on by some of the most creative and dedicated people in the world. And me.

**Other than performing, what are you most looking forward to at this year's festival?**

The silent disco, of course. Nothing brings us performers together more than our mutual hatred of it!

**What's coming up next for you after this?**

I'm hoping to take this show around the UK toward the end of the year - check all the social media spots for details - as well as a bit of potential international touring which I'm working out for early 2023. Of course, you could just wait for The Greatest Album Of All Time to be released and the inevitable Glastonbury headline slot to follow.

**Tom GK performs 'How To Record The Greatest Album In The World' from 4-28 Aug at Just The Tonic at The Mash House.**

## Alice Brine: Brinestorm

Here at ThreeWeeks we look forward with anticipation to the arrival at edfringe of new companies and artists each year, and to seeing their early works. That being the case, we always have our eye out for new blood.

One act making her first edfringe appearance this year rather caught our eye because of the theme she'll be covering in her debut hour. That comedian is New Zealand export Alice Brine and her show 'Brinestorm' is partly focused on her own experiences of having ADHD.

We spoke to her to find out more about the show, about how ADHD affects her, and what to expect from her in the future.

### Let's start with what to expect from the show - what sort of stuff do you talk about in it?

It's a mixture of wild observational comedy and true storytelling. Because I've got ADHD, a lot of the stories seem so ridiculous that they can't possibly be real, but they are, I'm just that fucked. I don't think people fully understand how insanely impactful ADHD is on daily life, so I'm shedding some light on that.

### What made you decide to cover these themes in a Fringe show?

They say write what you know, and I know I have full blown ADHD, so we went with that.

### How does it feel to make these life stories public like this? Are they all entirely autobiographical?

Fifty percent of the show is observational and the other half is true autobiographical stories about situations I've got myself into. One of the main ADHD symptoms is chronic oversharing, so I'm extremely comfortable talking about this, I dgaf.

### I know through personal experience that ADHD can be a really difficult thing to live with. How do you cope with its impact day to day?

Two words: prescription drugs.

### Does ADHD affect your performance style?

Yes it does and I love it. I'm very much an on-the-spot comedian. I've found myself in situations where I've got the light to get off stage and I haven't even started my set yet because I've been too distracted having fun, chatting shit with the crowd. I have a show called 'Peak Davidson' where I literally just spin a wheel of subjects suggested to me by the audience and riff off that. It's my favourite way of doing stand-up. Once this hour in Edinburgh is done I'm hoping to only do riff-comedy until I die.

### This is your debut show at the Fringe, but have you been to the festival before?

I am an absolute Edinburgh martian. I've done the New Zealand and Australian festivals but then I moved over to London and was hit with a pandemic so never got the chance to do Edinburgh until now. I have no idea what to expect from the Festival but I am really excited about hanging out with my comedy friends and getting five star reviews and back to back sold out crowds.

### What made you decide to bring this show to the Fringe?

Basically it seems to be this thing I need to tick off a list in order to book TV spots. So I'm hoping to get on 'QI' or at least 'Strictly' once this is done.



### What are you most looking forward to about your time in the Scottish capital this summer?

Snogging international comedians.

### You've already won awards - do you think they've had an impact on the progression of your career?

Definitely not.

### What hopes and ambitions do you have for the future?

Netflix special, heaps of money, dying peacefully before the world burns from climate change.

### What's coming up next for you after this?

Fingers crossed 'Strictly Come Dancing', if not I'm gonna start an OnlyFans, stay tuned.

Alice Brine performs 'Brinestorm' at Gilded Balloon Teviot from 3-28 Aug.



READ MORE FROM ALICE ONLINE AT:

threeweeks  
edinburgh.com/  
2022alicebrine

STAR OF 'AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 TRICKS' PRIME VIDEO, 'SECRETS OF THE BRAIN' SKY TV, 'SCHOOL OF HARD TRICKS' BBC

'VERY, VERY FUNNY'  
★★★★★ FRINGE GURU

'INCREDIBLY IMPRESSIVE'  
★★★★ THREE WEEKS

'AN INCREDIBLE MAGICIAN'  
JUDE LAW

'LIKE NOEL FIELDING PERFORMING SLEIGHT OF HAND'  
★★★★ FEST

COMEDY. WIZARDRY. BLIMEY.

**PETE HEAT**

**BLIMEY**

GILDED BALLOON TEVIOT

**8:40PM**  
AUGUST 3-29 (NOT 17)  
GILDED BALLOON TEVIOT  
WEE ROOM

BOOK HERE

@PETEHEAT  
PETEHEAT.CO.UK

## Henry Maynard: The Tragedy Of Macbeth



**You'll often hear us talk about our "TW favourites", acts and companies we've often first met, and experienced the work of, at the Edinburgh Fringe.**

**And the company we are focusing on in this particular feature - Flabbergast Theatre - are very much in that stable, having impressed us year after year with their acclaimed shows, to the point that we made the very easy decision to give them one of our ThreeWeeks Editors' Awards.**

**There's been a bit of a pandemic-induced gap in their edfringe productivity, so it was great to hear that they'll be heading back up to the Scottish capital this August with their latest show, a typically interesting staging of 'The Tragedy Of Macbeth'.**

**We are always keen to catch up with our TW Award winners, and we wanted to hear about the new show, and the company in general. So we spoke to Artistic Director Henry Maynard to find out more.**

**Everyone's heard of 'Macbeth', though I'm not sure everyone knows exactly what to expect in terms of plot. Does your version stick to the original story?**

Our version of 'Macbeth' uses the original text and is true to the storyline, but is a visually explosive exploration. The focus of our transformation is the placing of the world and the heightened physical language, influenced by our work with Matej Matejka and the Grotowski Institute in Poland.

**Have you sought to bring out specific themes through your performance of it?**

We have placed the witches front and centre, so that female power, the masculine fear of it, and gender expectation thrum as a central theme. Alongside this sits paranoia, envy, power and the madness that is engendered by the lack of sleep. We have spent a lot of time looking at the natural world - and the 'unnatural' elements of the play - and humanity's refusal of nature as compared to its celebration of it, delving into ritual and trance states to explore the dichotomy of the profane and the sacred.

**Can you tell us about the style, or genre, of the show - what manner of performance can audiences expect?**

You can expect a highly physical show with a visceral energy - elements of clowning, buffoonery, puppetry, chorus and ensemble work, all harnessed to complement the telling of the story and supported by Adam Clifford's wonderful, powerful and sensitive musical soundscapes, songs and choral drumming. We have also brought to the forefront the elements of comedy to offset the tragic themes. We wanted to make the play as entertaining as possible, humanising the characters and giving us sympathy for their plight.

**Your shows often have interactive elements don't they? Is it the same with 'Macbeth'?**

As a company we value direct address, and elements of cabaret and clowning, which means that our performances are actively communal, something that

definitely remains appropriate to Shakespeare's work. There will be some light interaction and the audience are directly addressed by the characters, especially during soliloquies, but no fear, we haven't dragged anyone on to play the porter... yet...

**What made you want to do 'Macbeth'?**

Within today's political and social climate, nothing feels more fitting. A show revolving around the bitter grasp for power and the struggle to hold on to it whilst the wolves are circling! Also I just love the play and, having done it with other companies three times, I had a lot of time to consider how I wanted it to interpret it.

**It's been a couple of years since the Fringe was 'normal' and the pandemic had a huge impact on everyone working in the arts - how has the last couple of years been for Flabbergast?**

COVID has been a major blow to the arts industry, but the fallow years have allowed us to re-examine what we are doing and why. We were lucky in that we had a small team of dedicated people that wanted to collaborate to create the new ensemble as it now stands. Over the period we started to put this version of 'Macbeth' together, bubbling together in residencies when the restrictions allowed, twice in Winchester and then twice in Poland at The Grotowski Institute, where we created the first skeletal structure of the show in 2021.

**You keep on returning to Edinburgh (yay) - what is it about doing the Festival that brings you back again and again?**

You mean apart from it being the best arts festival in the world? Edinburgh has been instrumental in cementing the reputation of the company. It truly is the only place that we have found that allows smaller less well funded companies to gain traction through word of mouth and the arts press. It's also the best marketplace for new work to find producers and venues from across the globe. That - and it's stupid fun.

**What's the best thing that's ever happened for you during an edfringe?**

There are so many to choose from. Receiving recognition in the form of the ThreeWeeks Award was a great highlight! I suppose also, thinking back to our first year with 'Boris & Sergey', receiving seven five star reviews, and six four star reviews... oh and a one star review, when we didn't really know anything about anything, was amazing... that, and the wonderful international bookings that we have had. Am I allowed three best things?

**And the worst?**

The worst thing to happen to me personally was standing on a spike which went through my shoe and foot whilst attempting to jump the fence at George Square... suffice to say performing for the next few days at Craigmillar Castle as Hippolytus in Phaedra was painful - especially the opening fight scene!

**Aside from performing, what are you looking forward to doing in Edinburgh this year?**

Drinking... eating sausage suppers, indulging in Scottish fry ups with haggis and square sausage... seeing all the wonderful friends that we have made over the past ten years... and watching brilliant shows! The hills - good for the calves and glutes - and sharing rooms that cost £1200 PCM+ with three other people - oohh political!

**What's coming up for you next after the Fringe?**

Next we are booking a UK tour of 'Macbeth', and looking to secure international dates, and then will begin the first tentative steps towards R&D of a new show. I didn't tell you, but it might include elements of panto, Commedia Dell'arte and the Marquis de Sade... though I reserve the right to completely change all that.

**Flabbergast Theatre perform 'The Tragedy Of Macbeth' at Assembly Roxy from 4-29 Aug.**



**READ MORE FROM HENRY ONLINE AT:**  
threeweeks  
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2022henrymaynard

## Mark Glentworth: Seven And A Half Years

If you attended Fringe 2021, you might have been lucky enough to catch 'Seven And A Half Years', acclaimed musician and composer Mark Glentworth's autobiographical one man musical.

If you didn't, you're in luck, because he's back this year for a full run at theSpace @ Surgeon's Hall. The musical tells the story of Mark's recovery from a career-stopping crisis, and offers an uplifting account of how he moved on from this difficult period in his life.

We were intrigued when we heard about the show, and aware of its creator's fascinating and impressive career history, so of course we wanted to have a chat to find out more.

### Tell us about the show - what story does it tell?

The title of the show 'Seven And A Half Years' is derived from the fact that I withdrew in an extreme way at the peak of my career for that period. Obviously the first question this raises is, why? Why did I withdraw in such an extreme way? The show starts to unpack, in conversations with my therapist over the phone, which the audience are privy to, my recovery year. I look back at my whole life to try and discover why I do what I do, through actual enacted scenes, but first and foremost through the songs. To be clear, the music really carries the emotional content and impact of the show in a way that only music can. In order to give a little background, I will say this, I've had a wonderful and rich career in music, and my life in general has been rich and fulfilling, but it has also been very challenging.

At a very early age my wife became wheelchair-bound with multiple sclerosis and I became her carer for many years. We also brought our wonderful son into the world and so fatherhood became part of my life during this time as well, it is important in terms of understanding my life's journey. But let's be clear, one of the hook lines from the show is this: "This isn't a show about being sick, it's about healing yourself". Returning to your question about what the show is actually about, of course it is about my seven and a half year withdrawal, but it is also about my

whole life, my journey with music as well, my deep desire to hold people up, told through the power of music, soundscape and scenes. People laugh, they may shed a tear at some point, but they leave feeling uplifted.

### What themes are explored through the musical?

I feel the themes that are touched on in my show are universal, what it is to be human, and vulnerable, to love, and coping with losing loved ones - my father passes away during this period. It is also about the strength of the human spirit, of hope and of our abilities to reinvent and rejuvenate ourselves. Of course, the subject of mental health and the way we cope with the pressures of modern life are an aspect of the story, but they are not the focus, or ignored either.

### What inspired you to create this? What made you want to share this story?

I created it because, first and foremost, I am a musician, composer and performer. It's all I've ever known, and sharing my life and creativity naturally are intrinsically who I am. But I feel this is the strongest reason: there is a commonality when one suffers something extreme and difficult, to firstly want to make sense of it, and secondly to strongly desire to try and help others who may be suffering the same, or to try and prevent others falling into the same difficulties, by sharing your own



personal experience. In my case, as a composer and musician, I created an artistic work to try and achieve this. In a similar way to when a person perhaps loses someone near and dear to them through a specific disease, and wants to work towards finding a cure and treatment for it.

### You've taken the show to the Fringe before. What made you want to bring it back?

It's very exciting that theSpace UK came to see the fledgling version of the show last year and said you must bring it back to Edinburgh! I feel the changes and refinements, plus working alongside the wonderful director Julia Stubbs, have taken the piece to a whole new level. I like to think that another year under my belt as a performer has also helped my delivery and my vocal strength too.

'Seven And A Half Years' is on at theSpace @ Surgeons Hall from 5-27 Aug.



READ MORE FROM MARK ONLINE AT:  
threeweeks  
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2022markglentworth

**KATE SMURTHWAITE**

**HUMANITY'S  
LAST  
HOPE**

**"FUN, ENERGETIC  
AND FULL OF IDEAS"  
JOHN CLEESE**





**7:40PM 6TH-28TH AUG (NOT 15TH)  
BANSHEE LABYRINTH CINEMA ROOM  
NIDDRY ST, EH1 1LG**



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## Livia Kojo Alour: Black Sheep

One of the things that we love about the Edinburgh Fringe is the presence of so many shows that don't fit neatly into the partitions of the official programme, mixing up different genres and juxtaposing them in innovative and effective ways.

When we heard about 'Black Sheep' – a new solo show by Livia Kojo Alour – we were immediately interested because it's exactly that sort of production, a theatrical blend of different elements brought together by an experienced and renowned sword-swallower and burlesque artist.

To find out more about the show, and the creative mind behind it, we put some questions to Livia in advance of her full edfringe run.



**Let's start by talking about 'Black Sheep'. It sounds like a difficult show to categorise in terms of a genre. How would you describe the style of it and how different elements of performance are used in it?**

The show is best described as an experimental theatre piece including physical performance, song and spoken word. It's a lively genre crossover with smooth transitions through music.

**What story do you tell through the show?**

I am telling my story. I was the black sheep growing up in an all white neighbourhood being othered. It's a story about a black woman searching for love, and how great loss can be the thing to push us to search for identity and belonging.

**When you say you're telling 'your story' – to what extent is the piece autobiographical?**

It's 100% autobiographical. It's my own crazy life. In 2017 I got invited to speak on TEDx. The team really wanted to hear about the life threatening sword swallowing accident I had in 2016. Once I set out to write it, I realised that I would not be able to tell the story of how I became a sword swallower

– and nearly died learning it – without talking about my past. After I lost my mother I got very ill with an eating disorder called Bulimia Nervosa. I was ill for almost thirteen years. Overcoming this illness needed a lot of courage and I've had to learn to overcome fear. Fear of dying and fear of living. I think this gave me the ability to learn such a dangerous skill as sword swallowing afterwards.

During my career in the circus industry the sword became a metaphor for the pain I had gone through and later, when my practice became more radical and political, for the pain people of colour go through within the structures of institutional racism. I had so much amazing feedback from my TEDx talk and learned that telling my story inspires people. This made me really happy and fulfilled. So I started writing more – first poetry but eventually my debut solo show!

**So the TEDx talk very much inspired you to tell your story through a show like this?**

Yes, it was mainly that. But I also used to be very outspoken on social media about racism, to the point that everyone came to me with their questions. I got very burned out and looked for other ways to communicate my thoughts

without being treated like public property. When I started writing, this show just flew out of my pen onto the paper!

**Can you tell us a little about your creative process? How do you go about creating a show like this?**

I always have visions before I start creating. Obviously with an hour long show I could not imagine the whole thing, but I knew what I wanted to talk about and saw myself in a black box style theatre. The creation happened in my living room during lockdown, and I performed a sold out online version via Zoom in 2020.

It was quite a challenge to animate and polish it up for real life theatre later! I brought Dr Marisa Carnesky – the British live artist and show-woman – onto the show to help with the physical performance parts. She was amazing. It's always good to have an outside eye on board! Once we got going the show grew and became visually really beautiful.

**What made you want to bring the show to the Edinburgh Fringe?**

I've been performing at the Fringe since 2012 in many different shows big and small under my

previous name MisSa Blue. I always loved coming back to Edinburgh. It's such a magical experience when the whole city turns into one big theatre. Over time I've developed some really amazing friendships with people who live here, so I always have many reasons to come back.

My last Fringe year was 2017, when I performed in a very big circus show. It was a great achievement, however I realised that I wanted to bring something more personal to the table. In big shows you can shine with your skill within a greater cast. This is amazing. However, I wanted to experiment with my voice. I wanted to sing and speak. Have my own say. Again I wanted to tell my personal story and share more intimate moments with the audience. Laugh, cry, learn... So I always dreamed of coming back with my own show and now it's finally the time!

**What hopes and expectations do you have for your time at the Festival this year?**

I hope to get a good audience in and meet loads of people from different walks of life. A good audience vibe is so important to stay healthy through a month-long run of shows. I really love the connections we can make during Fringe. I hope people will love my

work, learn from it and get inspired. I would also like to get invited to perform in Australia and the USA.

**Can we go back a bit now and talk about how you got to this point? How did you end up becoming a performer? Was it what you always wanted to do? What steps did you take to build a career?**

I knew I wanted to be on stage from when I was fourteen years old, but the early death of my mother stopped my whole life in its tracks. It took me almost fifteen years to recover from this setback. As I mentioned earlier, I suffered for a very long time from an eating disorder. Our family pretty much fell apart after my mother's death and I did not have a great support network. I moved from Hamburg, Germany to Berlin when I was seventeen and struggled to survive there, really. A few years later I came back and went into therapy. However I had a hard time finding healing and closure because on top of all that I was really alone in terms of community.

By that I mean I had no contact with anyone else who was black, as Germany wasn't a very diverse place at that time. The pain of loss really triggered a huge identity crisis that is still going on

## Josh Collins: 9 Circles

**Headed to the Edinburgh Fringe this summer is '9 Circles' by US playwright Bill Cain, a fascinating-sounding piece that tells a real life story of a soldier's journey through the Iraq conflict and the US justice system.**

**We were keen to find out more about the play and the team behind it, so I arranged a chat with Josh Collins, who plays the central role of Private Daniel Reeves.**

to some extent today - fuelling my work. I travelled the world as a yoga teacher for a while. And then settled down in Bangkok in Thailand for five years. But in the early 2000s I felt the need to go into therapy again, so I relocated back to Europe and went into a facility for six months. There I finally found some peace and healing from my illness. Once this sad chapter of my life was over I felt the need to express myself artistically again. I was already over 30 and thought "now or never!" I sold everything and moved to London to pursue my dream. It was so scary but so worth it!

**What drew you to London in particular at that point?**

London has everything I need to feel safe. Diversity, access to training for things like circus, a big queer community of colour. London is so vibrant. I need that. In 2010 there wasn't much of a cabaret/circus community in Germany: we looked to London and New York. I chose London, but started going regularly to New York for the same reasons. It became my home away from home and now I spend about two months of the year in the USA.

**What have been the highlights of your career thus far?**

This year I performed a short residency in Las Vegas with my sword swallowing act. That was definitely a major achievement. And besides my solo show, I am also very proud of my upcoming debut poetry collection, also called 'Black Sheep', which will be published by Polari Press in September. As the name suggests, the book is very much a counterpart to the live show. Also, in 2019 my swords were exhibited in the Museum Of Contemporary Art in Bordeaux, and I was voted most influential burlesque performer in Europe in 2018.

**What's coming up next for you? What will you be doing after the Fringe?**

I am touring my solo show and poetry collection nationally in autumn! Then hopefully back to NYC for Christmas. That's my other favourite city besides London. I am basically a part time New Yorker!

**'Black Sheep' is on at Assembly Rooms from 4-27 Aug.**

**Can you start by telling us a bit about the content of '9 Circles' - what story does it tell?**

'9 Circles' tells the real life story of Private Steven Dale Green during the conflict in Iraq and his trial in the American justice system.

**What themes does the play explore?**

The central issue explored is war crime, although - while the play explores the crime, and crime and punishment - it also explores the love, bravery and heroism soldiers experience during war.

**What is your part in the play? What attracted you this role?**

I play Private Daniel Reeves. What drew me most to the role is the idea of humanity expressed through an unlikely individual. Daniel is a soldier who is diagnosed with a personality disorder and

is on trial for serious war crimes. As he descends through the nine circles of hell, he faces many different lawyers, a shrink and a pastor - each of whom peel a layer away from him - leaving him stripped down and ultimately facing his true self. I originally premiered the role at The Sheen Center in NY - off Broadway - and so feel very grateful to be able to bring it to the UK.

**Can you tell us a bit about the rest of the cast?**

There are three other actors in the cast. Samara Neely-Cohen, who is also an executive producer; David Calvitto; and Daniel Bowerbank. They've all been absolutely brilliant and are extremely committed to the work!

**Can you tell us a bit about the playwright Bill Cain?**

Bill Cain is an American playwright, founder of the Boston Shakespeare Company, and a Jesuit priest. He co-directed '9 Circles' in New York and we became good friends during that run. He has also been a brilliant support during this process and has been a massive help in grounding the world of the play.

**The piece is directed by Guy Masterson. Can you tell us a little more about him and his approach to this project?**

Guy has been a tour de force. He is very skilled at seeing the 'big picture' and demands that each of us dig deep to find new levels of detail every day.

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

No, this is my first time in Edinburgh! So I'm really thrilled to be heading up for the whole run and looking forward to getting into the spirit of it all.

**What are you most looking forward to about being at the Festival? Are you planning to see other shows?**

I'm definitely planning on seeing as many shows as possible, but also know it's hard work and so I'm gearing up to flyer and pound the pavement!

**Can we go back a bit now? How did you come to be pursuing a performing career?**

**Was it what you always wanted to do?**

Acting has been in my family for generations... which meant I tried to run as far away as possible from being an actor! Alas, after many years of trying - and failing - to be a footballer I decided to give it a go - and haven't looked back since.

**What have been the highlights of your career thus far?**

Looking back now there have been many highlights, but I always sort of enjoy the rites of passage in the profession. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe feels like one of those, and so I'm grateful to be going up and telling a story there.

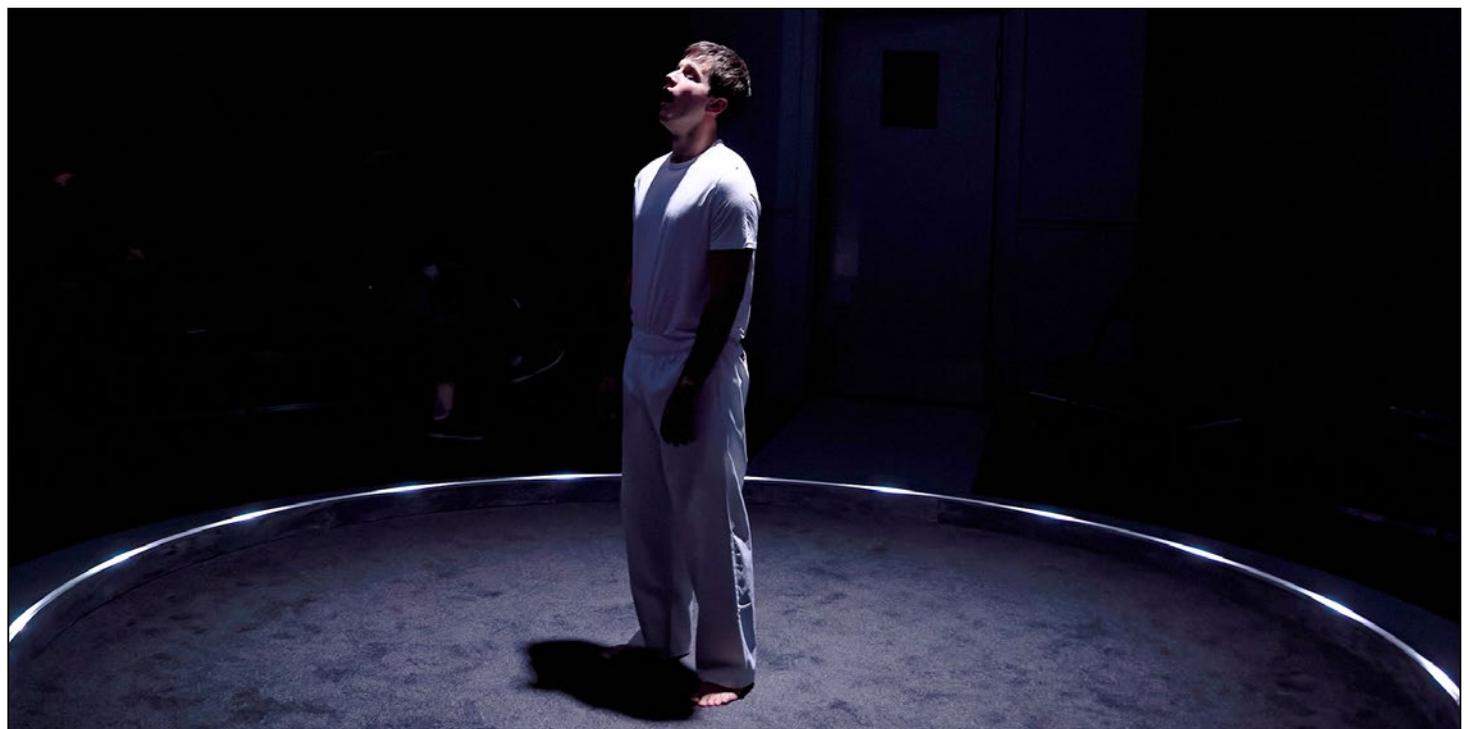
**What aims and ambitions do you have for the future?**

My business partners - Samara Neely Cohen and Jesse Collins - and I are in the early days of starting a production company, and so we have a few ideas brewing. Otherwise, I'm keeping open to receiving what wants to come through, and of course staying focused on the work at hand!

**What's coming up next for you after this?**

I am in a couple of films which are coming out early next year and also finishing up a bit of filming for a TV show in September.

**'9 Circles' is on at Assembly George Square Studios from 3-29 Aug.**



## Rosy Carrick: Musclebound



**If you are a Fringe regular - or were simply in town in 2018 - you may well remember 'Passionate Machine', a hit show by writer and performer Rosy Carrick that won great acclaim, and even an award.**

**When we heard that Rosy would be back in Edinburgh this summer, we were keen to hear about her new show. Though, even if it didn't come with the pedigree of being by Rosy, 'Musclebound' would have definitely piqued our interest, not least because of its rather personal and somewhat explicit themes.**

**But it wasn't just the show we were interested in: Rosy has such an interesting career, as not only does she perform and write plays, she's a poet and translator too. We spoke to her to find out more.**

**Can we start with what to expect from 'Musclebound' in terms of narrative? What story does it tell?**

Well, I start the play by saying that this is a story "about muscles and coming" - which sums it up, basically! As a young child growing up in the 80s, I became erotically obsessed with watching hyper-muscular men being tortured by their male antagonists in films like 'Conan The Barbarian' and 'Masters Of the Universe'. 'Musclebound' is about my rediscovery of these really quite bizarre - but incredibly powerful - scenes as an adult, and

about my mission to challenge and redefine my own sexual power in response to them.

At the same time, it explores the relationship between me and my daughter, Olive, who I had when I was nineteen, and who, at the time the show is set, was just turning eighteen herself. She was at the start of her own sexual journey - and it really made me look at my past sexual history - about what I wished I had known, and about certain patterns of behaviour I wished I hadn't fallen into. I've always been a single mother, and in many ways I've grown up alongside

Olive. I wanted to write the kind of shameless and honest account of female pleasure and sexual fantasy that I wished I'd seen at her age - it would have helped me a lot!

**What themes are explored through the play?**

The play explores themes of sexual shame, sexual power, and owning your sexual truths - from a very female perspective. It ended up being a really hilarious narrative - far funnier than I had anticipated it being. Partly, I think, because I talk about sexual fetish, objectification and masturbation in a very frank and playful way, but also because I'm quite an obsessive person - 'Musclebound' is a true story and I went in hard - from cruising my local bodybuilding gyms for hotties, to tracking down Arnold Schwarzenegger himself and quizzing him of the history of tortured beefcake! But besides all this, the play asks some serious - and crucial - questions about the politics of sexual pleasure, about which sexual lessons we need to teach our children, and which lessons we still need to learn for ourselves.

**So it's based on real life stuff, but to what extent? Is it all completely autobiographical?**

There are a couple of moments that I added for dramatic effect, but on the whole, yes - the play is completely autobiographical. Which seems kind of crazy, now I look back on it. Sometimes my director would say "but Rosy,

I really just think it seems too implausible that anyone in their right mind would be doing THIS right now!" And I would be forced to say "yes... but alas, it is the truth!"

**What made you want to create a show tackling this particular topic?**

When I first began work on this play, it was going to start and end on the subject of my love of tortured muscle, and the weird gender politics around that. There seemed to be a total inoculation against objectification for those male heroes - Schwarzenegger, Lundgren, Stallone and Van Damme - at the time the films were made.

The torture scenes are clearly so homoerotic, and yet these muscle movies were aimed squarely at straight men, and tended to be - at root - vehicles for reinforcing heteronormative, patriarchal ideology. Their sexual overtones have been recognised and appropriated by gay BDSM culture, but the existence of female desire seems not to have been acknowledged or reckoned with at all - even while chained heroes everywhere are literally crying out for - ostensibly straight - objectification!

But the more research I did, the more I found myself thinking about how the dynamics in these films intersected with my own sexual development. The stuff I absorbed from mainstream culture about

sex - and particularly about what is meant to be "a sexy woman" - when I was growing up was so insidiously toxic, and totally at odds with what I actually needed for sexual fulfilment.

In a weird way, I realised these films have probably been the most healthy arenas for my fantasies to operate in - they are at least transparent - everything is played out on the fetishised body itself. And then, as I say, my own daughter was growing up, and I had all these anxieties about how she might feel she needed to operate in the world as a sexual being... And suddenly, I was writing a very different - and more complex - kind of show!

**You've taken work to the Edinburgh Festival previously - how did it work out the last time? Did things go well?**

Yes, I brought my play 'Passionate Machine' to Edinburgh in 2018 and had such a brilliant time with it! It had already won the awards for Best New Play and Best Design at Brighton Fringe that year - and at Edinburgh won The Infallibles Award For Theatrical Excellence, and got really great reviews. It was a hard slog, physically - I had ruptured two discs in my spine in May that year so was wearing a support brace all the time except when I was on stage - but I think it helped strengthen me back up!

**What made you want to return to edfringe this year? What are you looking forward to about being back at the Festival?**

By the time lockdown ended last year I was really gagging to get back into live performance. I love the atmosphere of EdFringe and I'm really looking forward to getting out there and seeing loads of shows. I also just love the city itself. My sister lives here, my dad is in Gretna and my mum lived in Aberdeenshire for many years but, living in Brighton, I don't often get up there so it's nice to be getting some Scottish air into my lungs again!

**'Musclebound' is on at Assembly Roxy from 3-29 Aug.**



**READ MORE FROM ROSY ONLINE AT:**

threeweeks  
edinburgh.com/  
2022rosycarrick

## Tom Skelton: 2020 Visions (What If I Hadn't Gone Blind)

If, like us, you're fans of improv comedy - and comedy in general, in fact - you'll no doubt be aware of Tom Skelton, who first came to our attention over a decade ago as a member of acclaimed improv troupe Racing Minds.

More recently, though, we've seen him performing solo shows to approving audiences, including his latest set, which has won much acclaim down under.

Tom brings said latest show - '2020 Visions (What If I Hadn't Gone Blind)' - to the Fringe this summer, and although there is a bit of a clue in that title regarding what it might be all about, we still wanted to find out more.

Not just about the show, of course, but about Tom's path through comedy, how blindness has affected his creative life, and about what to expect from him in the future. And, naturally, what he loves - and looks forward to - about spending his Augusts in the Scottish capital.

We arranged to speak to him, ahead of his run in Edinburgh this summer.

**Can you start by telling us about what to expect from your edfringe show '2020 Visions'. Does it have a specific theme? What is it all about?**

So, no prizes for guessing which year this show was written for originally and intended to be performed in! 2020 marked a decade since I lost most of my sight due to a genetic condition that runs in my family, and this show is a look back at that decade of being blind and also imagines what my life might have been like if I hadn't lost my sight - the ultimate "what if?" / 'Sliding Doors' moment. It compares what I was really doing as I adapted to my low vision and sight-loss, and my imagination runs wild as I envisage the great man of history that otherwise I could have become throughout the decade!

**What inspired you to create a show centred on this theme?**

The end of the 2010s and the convenient simultaneous culmination of a decade of being visually impaired meant I was naturally reflecting and asking

myself those kinds of questions, and then the perfection of the title made it an impossible show to not do!

**How do you go about creating your shows? What's your creative process like?**

When I first wrote this show towards the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, much of the material was inspired by living in Australia at the time and silly things that happened to me to do with my eyesight. As I wandered through the outback - to make myself sound very very cool, or at least try to - I muttered ideas for stories and jokes into my phone either as dictation or voice note, and then I guess the show develops through performance as I try and work out what works and strip it down. It's very much a devised piece!

**What effect did losing your sight have on your creativity and the way you work?**

I have definitely leaned towards recording myself on various audio devices through the years to capture how jokes and stories

sound and, as I have come to terms with my eyesight more, the visual impairment has started to play a large role in the content of my comedy. I suppose I have realised that it is - hopefully! - interesting for me to tell things from my unique perspective, as in my literally unique perspective, from behind my eyes and the way things appear to me visually. Not that I am the great philosopher of our age!

**Can you tell us a bit about your background? Did you always want to be a performer? How did your performing career begin?**

I wanted to be a footballer, but I did always have an instinct for acting things out and doing silly voices, and when my gran and grandpa looked after me when I was very little, I always cast them in various roles in 'Robin Hood', 'Postman Pat' and 'Superman'... so my creativity was encouraged/indulged. I didn't really pursue any performing at school beyond drama GCSE

so, when I got into an improv troupe at university, I felt like I had rediscovered my childhood love of putting on little plays and doing silly voices, just like I did with my gran and grandpa.

**This isn't your first Edinburgh, by any means - what makes you keep coming back?**

It's such a vibrant, brilliantly intense month and the pace and rhythm of doing a show - or three! - every day just always makes me feel so alive. Performing, promoting and interacting with audiences, fellow performers and friends is so active - it's anti-passivity! I always come away from Edinburgh wanting to continue living that intensely - though perhaps after a week off being passive... and with less booze than I tend to have in the second half of the fringe... It's also just the opportunity to see so many amazing and diverse acts and shows in such a concentrated space - both geographically and temporally!

**What are you most looking forward to about edfringe 2022?**

I am really, really looking forward to my first sandwich at Tony and Margaret's café on Teviot place... but I've never learnt the name of the café as I can't see the name, so I'm sorry for not giving it a proper plug. But it's lovely, please go! [We think this is probably Salut, 18 Teviot Place]. I'm also really looking forward to that first laugh in that first show, and that feeling of the streets filling up with eager people coming to sample the Fringe.

**Tom Skelton performs '2020 Visions (What If I Hadn't Gone Blind)' at Underbelly Bristo Square from 3-28 Aug.**



**READ MORE FROM TOM ONLINE AT:**

threeweeks  
edinburgh.com/  
2022tomskelton



## Shannon Vitali and Christian Nimri: Chores

When we're perusing the listings of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe programme, we always have our eye out for brilliant family entertainment, especially the sort that has a genuine appeal for all family members: it's fabulous when parents and carers are just as enthralled as the children they've brought to see a show.

One such production - which was created with every age group in mind - is 'Chores', a comedy circus show from Australia featuring acrobatics, stunts and physical comedy in the style of the slapstick greats.

It's been to the Fringe before, but returns this time with a new cast. We spoke to the stars of the show - Shannon Vitali and Christian Nimri - to find out more.



**Can you start by telling us about the content of the show? Does 'Chores' tell a story?**

SV+CN: 'Chores' is filled with silliness, acrobatics, chaos, clowning and a whole lot of toilet paper. It's the story of two typical young kids playing in their mess of a room. Suddenly, mother's alarming screams rattle the kids back into acrobatic action. A generous serving of comedy and chaotic acrobatics accompanies every attempt at cleaning their room and doing their chores. This mess of chaos and comedy concludes with a last-minute cleaning spree. Mum is kept at bay and the rewards come flooding in.

**How would you describe it in terms of style or genre?**

SV+CN: A kids show created for adults. It's an acrobatic clowning show with plenty of slapstick, clowning and plenty of interactive gags inspired by slapstick legends Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin. There is little to no dialogue as well, so it's for quite literally everybody.

**Do the audience get involved with the show at all? Is it interactive?**

SV+CN: 100%!! The more the audience gives us the better the show will be. A huge part of the show is us interacting with the audience. We have plenty of planned gags and interactions that make 'Chores' so special... which

means - adults - let your kids have fun and be noisy!

**What sort of age group is the show aimed at?**

SV+CN: The show's aimed for anybody who wants to laugh! The entire show was created for kids AND adults the same.

**Can you tell us about how you go about putting a show like this together? What does the creative process look like?**

CN: 'Chores' was originally created by Patrick Heilmann and Julian Roberts. They have since passed on the overalls to many performers and we are the latest to take over. I'm really a new kid on the block, having only been learning and performing circus and acrobatics in the past two years.

SV: I've been in the industry - as a circus and stunt performer - for thirteen years, touring the world with well known companies. With this show, we had a three week rehearsal period, which started by learning the show as a skeleton, then we added in our own twangs, developed our own characters, learned a set of new skills and tricks, and then put it all together within the last week to create what we have now!

**It's been performed in Edinburgh before, hasn't it? What made you decide to bring it back to the Festival?**

SV+CN: It has! And it took some incredible awards as well as high five star ratings. We've been dreaming over the pandemic period of bringing the show back to the incredible Edinburgh Fringe, so we're hoping to bring some more glory back home for 'Chores' with the new cast. And of course much more glamorous future tours!

**What are you looking forward to about being in Edinburgh?**

SV+CN: It's the first full Fringe in a while, it's going to be absolutely raving. We're excited to do our show, see people everywhere, and have an unlimited amount of shows to watch. Being surrounded by multitudes of talent and different artists. It's truly going to be a magical - but exhausting! - experience and we can't wait.

**What are the best and worst bits about performing at the Fringe festivals?**

SV+CN: The best bits are being surrounded by so much incredible talent, as well as having the opportunity to see plenty of shows without having to travel too far. The worst part is how exhausting it can be - however, it's so rewarding.

**Aside from performing, what**

**will you be doing while you are in town?**

SV+CN: We're both into photography, so lots of sightseeing and portraits. Watching shows, socialising, networking and then, of course, being a tourist in the beautiful city.

**Can we go back a bit and talk about your career history? How did you come to be pursuing this kind of work?**

SV: I always knew I wanted to be a performer after watching 'Moulin Rouge'! I started off dancing, then did a bachelor's degree in circus with the National Institute Of Circus Arts. I was fortunate enough to travel the world performing with some incredible companies after my training.

CN: As I mentioned, I'm really new to the performing world. Although wanting to do it for my entire life, I never gave myself a chance to pursue it until about two years ago, when I started rollerskating. Then I started aerial, dance and acrobatics and became addicted to it. Now here I am!

**What have been the highlights of your careers thus far?**

SV: Being in the new Elvis Presley

film as a stunt performer. Circus wise, performing with diverse companies and travelling the world performing in incredible cities like New York.

CN: Having the opportunity to travel to the UK for performing, an absolute dream. As well, dancing for Courtney Act at a Pride festival in front of thousands of people.

**What hopes and ambitions do you have for the future?**

SV: To keep doing what I love doing, meaning a long and prosperous career.

CN: I want to do much more group acrobatics and aerial arts, as well as bettering myself as a performing artist. I also want to make my own shows and tour them internationally.

**What's coming up next for you after this?**

SV+CN: Hopefully a year round world tour with 'Chores'. We do already have dates booked for the show back in Australia, so we'll be returning their first, before hopefully heading back out into the world.

**'Chores' is on at Assembly Rooms from 3-28 Aug.**

## Rob Ward: The MP, Mandy And Me

Regular Fringe-goers will no doubt be aware of the work of Rob Ward, the creative force behind 'Gypsy Queen' - a play about bare knuckle fighter and traveller 'Gorgeous' George O'Connell - which won much acclaim when it was on at the Festival in 2017 and 2018.

Rob returns to the Fringe this year with 'The MP, Aunt Mandy And Me', which is about a young gay man's encounter with an MP, and explores the issues of consent and coercive control. It's a topic that's... well, topical, in the light of recent high profile allegations against certain elected representatives.

We were keen to find out more about the play - as well as the writer and performer of it - so we arranged a chat with Rob Ward ahead of his Edinburgh run.

**Can you start by telling us a bit about the plot of 'The MP, Aunt Mandy And Me' - whose story does it tell and where does the narrative take us?**

This is the story of Dom. He's a young gay man and steam train fanatic who, despite struggling to get 100 likes for an Instagram post, has convinced himself he is a social media influencer and a sought after #instagay. He dreams of life as an A-Gay in a swanky city centre apartment, but his crippling anxiety prevents him from living far from the small sleepy village in the north of England - five miles from the nearest gay - in which he grew up.

He lives with his mum, who spends most of her time high on MDMA - her 'Aunt Mandy' - and listening to Simply Red records. One day, a chance encounter with his local MP Peter Edwards presents Dom with a job and the opportunity to grow as a person. More importantly, it brings Dom into direct contact with the only gay man he can talk to that isn't a random profile on a hook-up app. However, it soon becomes clear that this relationship will come at a cost for Dom as the play explores sexual consent and coercive control. In an attempt to live the life he has always wanted to, just how much does Dom have to give up?

**What themes are explored through the play?**

At the heart of the story is the

sexual misconduct of an elected politician. 58 MPs have faced such allegations this year. There are 600 MPs in total in Parliament. It isn't just an issue with politicians of course, this is a tale of power and the abuse of it. It is also an exploration of consent, coercive control and grooming, specifically within the gay male community, and the script also investigates the part that intoxication, hyper-sexualisation and image obsession within mainstream gay male culture can play in contributing to some of these abusive situations.

Physical attractiveness has long been prime real estate amongst gay men. We have prioritised this above so many other qualities, and I suppose the provocation within this play is about the culture this has created. On a positive note, I think we're moving into a world where, for a lot of younger LGBTQ+ people, the days of uninvited arse-grabbing, unsolicited dick pics and other such oppressive sexual behaviour is unacceptable. The #MeToo movement was an opportunity for introspection that I don't think we took as a gay male community, though I think the overall acceptance of this sort of predatory behaviour is diminishing.

The sexual liberation and freedom that comes with being a gay man is a wonderful thing, but that freedom has to extend to every gay man and it must always be an active choice, not one that they feel is an unfortunate by-product

of their sexuality and associated behaviour that has to be tolerated. This all sounds pretty heavy, sure, and I feel our production gives these issues the weight they deserve. But my scripts will always be packed with lighter moments, such as the human experience. 'The MP, Aunt Mandy And Me' is full of biting humour and contemporary queer commentary, and includes various comedy characters that make up the fictional village in which the play is set.

**Is there any element of the autobiographical in it?**

There are autobiographical elements in there, but with the intense nature of the subject matter I hope you don't mind that I won't expand any further on that. But the play is also an amalgamation of conversations I've had with many gay men, all of whom have generously shared their experiences with me as we collectively attempted to understand the issues that form the central conceit of the piece. The partnership that we have with Survivors Manchester - the survivor led charity for male survivors of sexual abuse and exploitation - has also played a pivotal role in shaping this script.

**What inspired you to write a play tackling this subject matter and these themes?**

It was a combination of personal and collective experience and some questions I had been asking of myself and my community for a while. The idea behind making the central character a gay man who doesn't necessarily understand mainstream gay male culture was very much my experience for many years. I'm not into steam trains myself, but in my experience my love of sport - perceived as being atypically heteronormative - raised many eyebrows amongst many gay men I have met over the years.

I think within a minority group those who are perceived to be different aren't always trusted, it is seen almost as a betrayal of the culturally defined norm. I wanted to capture some of this disenfranchisement in the script, thus we focus on a young gay man with a hobby that seems alien to the image obsessed sexual culture he strives to belong to. In terms of the wider context of the play, I've always had an interest in politics and have been an active member of the Labour Party through good

times and bad. It's been mainly bad for twelve years now.

As a northerner, the decision to set it in a small northern community was inspired by the decision many of these communities made to vote for Brexit and tilt towards social conservatism over the past six years. However, the play attempts to undermine some of the stereotypes of these people that have been developed by the London media.

**Did you always intend to perform this yourself? How does the fact that you are performing your own work affect how you work with your director?**

I frequently perform my own material. At first, this was because no bugger would give me a job. Over time, I've realised I can hold my own - or at least no one has yet been brave enough to tell me to stop. I love one-person shows. They are innately theatrical - the audience have already suspended so much of their belief as they follow one performer often portraying multiple characters - and because of this I think there is

a fun, cheeky and playful quality to them. It's you and an audience, no one else. As a performer - and hopefully as an audience member - that creates a special experience.

The director, Clive Judd, has been my friend since we were eighteen. We have never worked together professionally, despite both having worked in the industry for over ten years now. Sure, there are down-sides to working with Clive. He encourages me to drink far too much after rehearsals and he's a Villa fan - I guess someone has to be! But Clive might just be the most brilliant person I've ever been in a rehearsal room with. I totally trust him to take my words, and an issue that is incredibly delicate, and do right by them. If you don't have that with a director, then it will never work.

**Rob Ward performs 'The MP, Aunt Mandy And Me' at Pleasance Dome from 3-21 Aug.**



**READ MORE FROM ROB ONLINE AT:**

threeweeks  
edinburgh.com/  
2022robward



# EDINBURGH 2022

## ThreeWeeks Co-Editor Caro Moses recommends 81 shows to see at this year's Edinburgh Festival, in handy sets of three...

### WOMAN ONLY COMEDY

**Eryn Tett Finds Her Audience**  
Just The Tonic At The Tron,  
4-28 Aug

It's the official start of our Three To See show recommendations for 2022 and what better way to get going than with the news that this year Just The Tonic is running a venue that features exclusively female comedians? What a joy. So, to mark the occasion, we're headed to The Tron and, frankly, I want to see everything on offer here, but we're going to have to pick three because of the demands of the format. So we'll kick things off with fab up and comer Eryn Tett. What to expect? "A bizarre exploration of her own thoughts; word play, odd observations and surreal storytelling set to a charmingly uncomfortable rhythm". Sounds good, we're more than sold.



was busy travelling around Canada and the world, and that's what this show is about: where is she really from when she has been moving from place to place with her family, going to ten different schools, learning myriad languages, and trying to fit in? We think she's going to take us on a fascinating - and funny - journey.

**Abigoliah Schamaun: Legally Cheeky**  
Just The Tonic At The Tron,  
4-28 Aug

"This American girl in London had it all. Then one day the Wicked Witch of Westminster - Priti Patel - told Abigoliah to click her sparkly heels and go 'home'. In that instance, everything changed. Abigoliah was faced with the fight of her life and the stakes couldn't be higher. If she wins, she stays in the UK. If she loses, she loses everything". Fabulous Fringe regular Abigoliah Schamaun has been delighting our reviewers since they first laid eyes on her back in around 2013 - and in the intervening time she's been gathering four and five star reviews from them. What monster would send her away? Oh, right. Yes.

**Aliya Kanani: Where You From, From?**  
Just The Tonic  
At The Tron, 4-28 Aug

Our final woman from this woman-only venue is Aliya Kanani, who is making her Edinburgh debut, but is far from being a beginner. Based in Canada and boasting a Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Actress on her CV, she's already performed this show to great acclaim at other festivals, including the Toronto Fringe and the Melbourne Comedy Festival. Before all this performing success, Aliya

### SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL

**Nightmare Magic**  
PBH's Free Fringe @ Voodoo  
Rooms, 6-28 Aug

David Alnwick is doing quite the number of shows at this year's Fringe: just stick his name into the edfringe.com website to see how busy he's going to be over August. But the one that jumped out at me - because I was thinking spooky thoughts - is 'Nightmare Magic', in which the extremely popular magician doesn't just do magic, but in fact tells a ghost story using magic. I gather it's a pretty scary tale, that focuses on the decoding of an old journal, and it's won much acclaim. That being the case, it sounds like you probably need to turn up at least an hour early to be in with a chance of getting to see this show. But you know, it's probably worth it.

**Séayoncé: Res-Erection**  
Assembly Roxy, 2-28 Aug  
This one's less spooky, because



although it deals in occult themes, it's a comedy cabaret seance led by "late great ghost whisperer" Séayoncé, and it's going to be highly entertaining, promising a show packed full of music, laughter, death and sex, cabaret ballads and audience interaction. Oh, and the summoning of the ghost of Anne Boleyn... how could you live with yourself if you missed that? It's the creation of award winning rising star Dan Wye, whose comic timing and compelling characters will no doubt keep you enthralled, perhaps even under a spell? Either way, you're going to have fun.

**Saloum**  
EIFF at Vue/Cameo, 17+19 Aug

We were so pleased when the Edinburgh International Film Festival decided to move back to August dates so that the city's big movie celebration also takes place during Edinburgh's festival month - just like in the olden days. And not least because it means we can include some of the enticing screenings they are offering in our Three To See tips. This particular film really grabbed our attention - a "Senegalese horror western with a twist" released in 2021, that promises a rather wild ride. "When a revenge mission goes awry, a group of half-Senegalese, half-Central African outlaws stumble across a cursed land, and the bandits, led by the charismatic Chaka, have to deal with supernatural forces that don't fear guns". Yikes.

### CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERNS

**The Climate Crisis Hasn't Gone Away**  
Festival Of Politics at Scottish  
Parliament, 12 Aug

There are always shows and events at the Festival that take a look at issues like global warming and the pollution of the environment, and such things feel more pertinent than ever, not least because of that outrageously hot weather we've been having lately. We begin with a discussion at the small but beautifully formed Festival Of Politics, which is chaired by Tom Whipple, Science Editor of The Times, and features Professor Ali Watson OBE, Managing Director of climate justice education think tank the Third Generation

Project; UK Energy Research Centre co-Director Dr Keith Bell; and environmental scientist and professional Lucy Stanfield-Jenner.

**Matt Winning: Hot Mess**  
Assembly George Square  
Studios, 3-14 Aug

The ThreeWeeks team have been fans of Matt Winning for rather a long time now, for we have been enjoying his work for - checks clock - slightly upwards of a decade; and we've always been rather impressed that a working scientist is also producing marvellous Fringe shows. Now we're even more wowed, because he's recently published a book about the global warming issue - 'Hot Mess: What On Earth Can We Do About Climate Change?' - and his edfringe offering this year is a live show based on that. The book has great reviews on Amazon and I expect the show will be similarly acclaimed.

**You're Safe Til 2024: Deep History**  
Pleasance Courtyard,  
3-29 Aug

And now for something theatrical related to the topic at hand, a play focusing on one specific aspect of the climate emergency, namely, the increasing frequency of bush fires down under. Here's what to expect: "In the last hours of 2019, David Finnigan's best friend prepared to make a break for home with his family before fires cut off the highway. As Australia was hit by the worst fires in the country's recorded history, an area the size of England burned and one billion animals were incinerated. Written over the last three days of the



decade, as David's friends and family raced to evacuate amid the devastation, 'Deep History' is the story of 75,000 years of human history and 75 hours of brutal consequences".

### IMPROV SHOWS

**CSI: Crime Scene Improvisation Underbelly**  
Bristo Square, 5-28 Aug  
And now time for another comedy-focused section, and in fact a style of comedy that the TW team have been passionate about since the early nineties. For yes, we are big fans of improv and seek it out, well, all year round really, but especially during the old edfringe when you can barely move for it. CSI are one of our more recently acquired improv faves, a troupe who create a new and funny whodunnit in every show as they try to solve murder mysteries invented by that day's audience. This lot are much acclaimed - it's not just us that likes them - and it's brilliant for those of you who are fans of both detective stories and comedy, right?

**Starship Improvise**  
Pleasance Dome, 6-21 Aug  
Speaking of which, here's an improv show that ought to appeal to people who are fans of both sci fi and



comedy, proving that there really is something at this festival for everyone. The conceit with this one is that each improvised show is an episode of a Star-Trek-like smash hit TV programme, which ran for many seasons and made international stars of some its cast. The audience will suggest the content of each instalment, which will play out against the background of fifteen years of behind-the-scenes drama - in-fighting, relationships, sexual tensions, ego, and so on. It sounds like amazing fun and is performed by some seasoned pros, so don't miss it.

**Sex, Lies & Improvisation**  
theSpace @ Symposium Hall,  
5-20 Aug

"A dark comedy about lying together. Inspired by an anonymous lie chosen by the audience, each

show reveals why we lie to the people we love". We would have been rather intrigued by this improv concept even if we hadn't already been fans of the team behind it, who are also responsible for 'Mates', the improvised 90s sitcom. It's also something of a follow up to 'Between Us', a theatrical improvised show that we fell in love with back in 2019, that depicted a couple's relationship using facts and anecdotes from the audience, and created stories that were funny, yet also moving and serious. So yes, we'll be expecting high quality stuff.

## ALTERNATIVE SHAKESPEARE

**Thom Tuck And Tim FitzHigham: Macbeth**  
Underbelly Cowgate, 4-20 Aug

There's always something of an abundance of productions of Shakespeare's work at the Festival, and alongside the more traditional stagings, there are also usually plenty that use the Bard's work as a jumping off point, or simply just mess with it. I thought we'd take a look at a few falling into that latter category, starting with one that's in the comedy section, so you can be sure that this is not a standard version of the great Scottish tragedy. It's brought to you by two long term, delightful favourites of ours - TW Editors' Award winners no less - so you can expect something highly entertaining, and with a different guest director daily, an ever-changing beast.

**Waiting For Hamlet**  
theSpace Triplex, 6-26 Aug

"Being dead doesn't mean you have to take it lying down, but you can't put right what's rightly written wrong". This one's in the theatre section, but it's a comedy, so it promises to be another amusing riff on what we all understand to be a tragedy, and an award-winning one to boot. This time it's Hamlet in the limelight - or rather, his royal dad in the afterlife - as 'Waiting For Hamlet' - a play that won the Kenneth Branagh New Writing Award - sees the deceased king stuck in purgatory with his old jester Yorick. Murdered (as you no doubt well know) by his brother, Hamlet Senior seeks revenge, and to win back both his queen and his crown, whilst Yorick tries to stop him from making the biggest mistake of his post-life existence.

**Midsummer** theSpace @ Niddry Street, 15-27 Aug

We're really intrigued by this one, which gives 'A Midsummer Night's



Dream' what you might call a serious facelift. US-based theatre company Tiltyard have ripped apart the play at the seams and reconstructed it using text from every other Shakespeare play, so when you see it, you'll basically (sort of) have seen the entire oeuvre. And as well as sounding pleasingly adventurous, this adaptation also addresses serious contemporary concerns: "A radical Shakespearean remix for an era of ecological crisis, 'Midsummer' is an opportunity to reawaken our faith, and to ask ourselves the moment's all-important question: In a heartsick, broken, wintry world, how do we imagine a future?"

## TRIED + TESTED

**Luke Wright's Late Night Dance Floor Fillers**  
Pleasance Dome, 3-29 Aug

If you're wondering what we might mean by 'tried and tested', let me clear that up: it's a section full of acts that we love, and that we trust to never ever present anything other than something fabulous. Poet and playwright Luke Wright has been a favourite of ours for, well, more years than we now care to remember, to be honest, and we know you'll be blown away by this late night offering of rock and roll poetry. Don't stop there though: please also go and watch him perform his excellent play 'The Remains



Of Logan Dankworth' over at the Pleasance Courtyard in the late afternoon. I mean, you probably already know he's brilliant, but here's your reminder that you get to see him again this year.

**This Is Not Therapy**  
PBH's Free Fringe @ Banshee Labyrinth, 6-14 Aug

Here's another great creator from the world of the spoken word, one we feel sure will be performing more fantastic material this Fringe. In past years Tina Sederholm has held our reviewers entranced with her well-crafted storytelling as she entertained audiences with both the heartwarming and the poignant. This year's show promises a meditation on ageing, and all that comes with it: "Think you're the only one who's making it up as you go along? You're not. Join Tina as she tackles her fifties with as much humour, grace and sensible footwear as she can muster. From parenting ageing parents, battling tyrannical deadlines and fitting in the occasional nap, Tina aims to make it less of a crisis and more of a celebration".

**Will Pickvance: Half Man Half Piano**  
Assembly George Square Gardens, 3-28 Aug

This show could have ended up in so many of the categories we have in these here Three To See tips. It nearly ended up in musical comedy, it would have been at home in the shows with music section, and even the one-person shows. But because Will Pickvance is such a favourite for us, it ended up here, under shows that won't fail you, and which you really should not miss. This is listed in the cabaret section, which is definitely the right place for it, because although it's full of music, it's the musical anecdotes in between, juxtaposed with the fusion of classical and popular song, that make the show quite as winning as it is. So fab we gave Will Pickvance a ThreeWeeks Editors' Award and we are very happy to see him back at the Fringe.

## SONS + FATHERS

**The Awkward Silence's Big Break**  
Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3-29 Aug

There are quite a number of shows at this year's Fringe that would fit in this 'sons and fathers' section, in fact, so in the end it was quite hard to choose between them all. But this show is the one that inspired the theme, so of course it had to be in it. And there are other reasons, of course, not least the fact that it looks brilliant. This is a comedy musical about Louis, who wants his dad, Mike, out of his life. The only problem is that Mike has just got the pair of them sent to prison, which, clearly, would put a spanner in the works. "Can Louis navigate

life inside without his old man to guide him? Can Mike win back his son's affection before it's too late?" I've got my fingers crossed.

**Aidan Jones - Taco**  
Laughing Horse @ 32 Below, 4-28 Aug

Australian comedian Aidan Jones is something of a festival favourite - and not just at the Edinburgh Festival, of course, I am talking Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne's festivals too. This year he is doing two shows at the Laughing Horse venues, and you should definitely see both if you can fit it in, but let's talk about the one we're here to talk about and why it sounds so interesting. In 'Taco', Jones tells the story of his Colombian parentage: how his mother became pregnant while backpacking in South America at the age of 22, and how in September 2019, he finally met his biological father for the first time. An interesting story in the hands of a great comedian.

**The Great Almighty Gill**  
Assembly George Square, 3-29 Aug

"My dad, Dave, died on 5 November 2015 of complications related to dementia. It was f\*cking awful. But the eulogy I gave was brilliant. It deserves a bigger crowd. My way to see if from the molten wreckage of dementia some humanity, art and wonder can be salvaged". This autobiographical performance



from writer and actor Daniel Hoffman-Gill sounds like it could be horribly sad, but I think you'll find it will be leavened by its dark humour, and the fact that as much as it offers insights into living with dementia, and the creator's sometimes troubled relationship with his dad, it's also a celebration of the life of a beloved father, husband and gifted artist.

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT

**Work.txt**  
Summerhall, 3-28 Aug

It really wouldn't be the Fringe if you didn't try to make sure and

see something that goes a little beyond the more standard realms of performance, and thankfully, there is plenty of it. So this is another section where it is hard to decide what to pick from what's on offer. We've had a go, though, because we like a challenge, and this first one is something we've had our eye on for a while, given its recent success in old London town. And I suspect once we describe it, you'll be as intrigued as we are: it's a show about the gig economy, financial instability and bullshit jobs, and it's performed entirely by the audience. See, I told you you'd want to find out more.

**Megalith**  
Zoo Southside, 5-28 Aug

So here's another interesting one, especially for those of you who like loud and violent stuff.



Yes, I know you are out there. Every performance of this show from 2018 Herald Angel winners MECHANIMAL involves smashing up to 250kg of rocks - and the production was developed in collaboration with researchers from Bristol University and the Natural History Museum. And for why, all this rock bashing? Well, it's a show that offers a journey to the Neolithic origins of mining - courtesy of a silent physical performer and a digital sound artist - and explores the way that copper has been at the cutting edge of technological development for thousands of years, and its role in our ongoing ecological crises.

**The Twenty Sided Tavern**  
Pleasance Dome, 3-28 Aug

You might not be new to the idea of the "choose your own adventure" concept, but this show will provide you with an exciting and interesting version of that idea. It's inspired by the gameplay of Dungeons & Dragons (and I know there'll be D&D fans out there who will appreciate that) and each show's direction is steered by the audience, who will access a website via their smartphones and make choices that inform the performance of the actors on stage. Like I said, a given for D&D fans, but it promises to be a funny

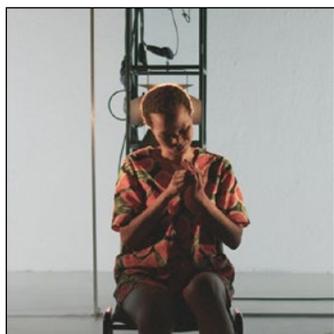
# EDINBURGH 2022

immersive theatre experience that's suitable for all fringe-goers over the age of eight - so it might be a good one to add to your list of family friendly shows.

## MIGRANT STORIES

**As British As A Watermelon**  
The Studio, 23-26 Aug

Themes of migration, immigration and refugee stories have - with good reason - been a consistent theme at the Festival, and in the arts world generally, in recent times. With that in mind, we've picked three events focusing specifically on migrant tales. And, with this first one, we make our first



foray into the International Festival programme, which is fit to burst with high quality, compelling stuff once again this year. It's a theatrical piece by Zimbabwean writer and performer mandla rae that weaves together poetry and storytelling, and explores the artist's fragmented LGBTQ asylum and childhood migration memories, and asks powerful questions about belonging, trauma and forgiveness.

**Fatima Daas & Shumona Sinha: Immigrants in Paris**  
Edinburgh Art College, 26 Aug

And hurrah, another first foray, this time into the Edinburgh International Book Festival, an event long beloved of our book-ish team members. It's got a huge programme, of course, and a really diverse selection of events, but here's one choice from it, which focuses specifically on the experience of migrants in Paris - where they make up twenty percent of the population - and two prizewinning autobiographical novels set in France. Appearing are Fatima Daas, whose book 'The Last One' deals with the experience of being French-Algerian, Muslim and gay; and Shumona Sinha, author of 'Down With The Poor!', which details her experiences with French immigration authorities.

**Tickbox Summerhall, 16-28 Aug**

Back to the Fringe now for 'Tickbox', a solo show written and

performed by Lubna Kerr, which returns to the Festival following a successful run last year. If you didn't see it last time, you're in for a treat, as Kerr takes on a broad range of characters in this piece focusing on a life growing up as an Asian in Glasgow, which exposes the sort of casually racist perceptions and expectations that newcomers are routinely subjected to. "How did a Pakistani family cope when arriving in cold and wet Scotland? Like many migrants they used food to make friends. But when no one had heard of a samosa, how could the barriers be broken down?" Expect something warm and funny, whilst dealing with the serious points.

## FAMILY SHOWS

**The Lost Letters Quaker Meeting House, 8-13 Aug**

There are family shows scattered throughout these tips - which is to say, shows that are suitable for younger audiences as well as their older companions - but we thought it would be nice to also have a section specifically dedicated to things to entertain your holidaying kids. First up is one of our all-time favourite Fringe regular companies, Newbury Youth Theatre, who always turn up at the Festival with beautiful shows that win lots of acclaim, and yes, they're another past winner of one of our Editors' Awards. Their latest show is "a magical portmanteau production of love, friendship and forgotten messages that connect people across warzones and Christmas wish lists in a collection of heart-warming modern fables", suitable for children over the age of eight.

**Around The World With Nelly Bly** theSpace At Surgeon's Hall, 5-20 Aug

"The year is 1889 and intrepid journalist Nellie Bly is about to embark on her biggest adventure yet: racing around the world to beat Jules Verne's famous fictional hero, Phileas Fogg. In a journey that captures the imagination of the world, she traverses continents, faces fierce ocean storms and even adopts a monkey! But can she make it back in less than 80 days?" We love the sound of this adventure story told with the aid of puppetry, audience interaction and compelling characters, and of course the fact that its central character is female - as the company point out, girls are allowed to have adventures too. Recommended age range is six to twelve.



**Mark Thompson's Spectacular Science Show Gilded Balloon**  
at the Museum, 3-21 Aug

We've always loved tracking down the science-based shows on as part of the Festival, and often found ourselves especially excited to find one in the children's programme. On a serious note, one feels it's very important to encourage young people to develop an interest in science, even if they're not destined to be career scientists; but on a less serious note, such shows usually involve some really fun and jaw-dropping experiments that will engage even the most easily distracted child. And that's what you can expect from Mark Thompson, and his award winning 'Spectacular Science Show', which promises an interactive hour of explosions, chemical reactions, and, um, toilet roll. Hurrah!

## REMODELLED CLASSICS

**Classic!**  
Pleasance Courtyard, 3-29 Aug

You know how our Shakespeare section featured shows that were very much departures from the norm in terms of their actual relationship with the Bard's work? Well, we're kind of doing a similar thing here, but it's a



bit more broad ranging, in that we're looking at plays featuring other authors' mashed up stuff. In the case of 'Classics!', it's a whole plethora of different works being plundered, and it's all done at rather high speed. It's been written by 'Coronation Street' and 'Emmerdale' writers Lindsay Williams and Peter Kerry, and it features some novel ideas (yes,

novel ideas!) like presenting 'Moby Dick' as a sea shanty, 'Jane Eyre' as a silent movie, and 'Oliver Twist' as a film noir. And it looks like the whole thing will be fab.

**Prejudice And Pride**  
theSpace Triplex, 5-27 Aug

Here's one for fans of musicals, and with the added bonus of having a connection with Jane Austen's (probably) most famous work. This is an award-winning gender-swapped production, a folk music comedy featuring a live band and fifteen original songs, and - warning - it contains gunfire. Why? Well, if I explain the setting a bit more it might all become clear. Set in the United States, it focuses on the Loughorn boys in East Tennessee, who "must find love or at least empathy with the millionaires next door before they lose the family farm". So that sounds like fun.

**Jungle Book Reimagined**  
Festival Theatre, 25-28 Aug

And finally, we're back over to the International Festival for a somewhat different take on the 'The Jungle Book'. This dance piece is by an EIF favourite - internationally acclaimed choreographer Akram Khan - and it reinvents the journey of Mowgli through the eyes of a climate refugee: "In a near future world, a family is torn apart as they escape their homeland, ravaged by the impact of extreme weather. Arriving alone in a deserted modern city, and with wild animals claiming the streets as their own, the child soon discovers unlikely allies in this strange new jungle". It's put together by an amazing team and is suitable for older children (eight plus), so it's another family outing possibility to consider.

## WOMEN'S STORIES

**The Sian Clarke Experience**  
Underbelly Cowgate, 4-28 Aug

We had a focus on fathers and sons earlier, so now let us give women the floor for a moment and check out some fab Fringe performers telling stories of distinctly gender influenced experiences. Let's begin at Underbelly with 'The Sian Clarke Experience', which is: "An ode to every man who has belittled her, made her feel unsafe, objectified her, told her she can't be funny, called her a slut, told her to smile more... A dark, twisted comedic piece full of aggression and discomfort, examining the constraints of a woman biting back in a society eager to silence and

villify those no longer accepting its bullshit. That, or a show about a woman who needs to learn to take a joke".

**She-Wolves**  
Greenside @ Nicolson Square, 5-13 Aug

It has to be said, of course, that there are lots and lots of shows that could fit with the theme of women's stories, for such events are all over the Festival. And while you might expect to find most of them in theatre, or perhaps in comedy, this one's from the dance/physical theatre category and it sounds oh-so-interesting, not least because of the historical content (I love historical content). 'She-Wolves' tells tales of forgotten female rulers from the past - stories of women from the mediaeval and Tudor periods - conveyed via movement, speech, image and song, with material based on Helen Castor's excellent book and BBC series of the same name.

**The Actress**  
Underbelly Bristo Square, 3-29 Aug

"1660, London, England. Charles II has returned to the country to take the throne and immediately reopened the theatres. It is a time of debauchery and revelry and speculation is swirling around the city that for the first time a woman



will be allowed onto the stage. The King's Company invite two very different women, from very different backgrounds, to join them, but only one can be the first". Yay, another historical piece, about real historical characters, and another great story, this time back in the theatre section. And as well as being an interesting tale, one can't help thinking it has contemporary relevance for women.

## EXHIBITIONS

**Yan Wang Preston: With Love. From An Invader**  
Royal Botanic Gardens, until 28 Aug

The festival is a busy, bustling thing and we always feel that -

# THREE TO SEE

especially if you are in town for the whole run - taking some time to do something a bit more quiet and reflective now and then is definitely good for you. And what could be more suitable than enjoying a walk in Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Gardens, which are already a bit of a walk (or a cab ride) from the city centre. Once there you can take in Yan Wang Preston's audio-visual installation, which is a response to xenophobia and racism, and an investigation of the connections between identity, migration and the environment. It looks like a fascinating exhibition.

## Barbara Hepworth: Art And Life

Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art, until 2 Oct

Another nice place to walk to - and another great place to see great art - is my favourite of the big



Edinburgh galleries, the Scottish National Gallery Of Modern Art on Belford Road. You can take in the permanent collections while you are there, but what we are recommending here is a major retrospective of the work of Barbara Hepworth, one of the most acclaimed British sculptors of the Twentieth Century. The exhibition features more than 120 pieces, charts her development as an artist, and includes some of her most celebrated and iconic works. It also promises to show how her passion for dance, theatre, music, religion and science, and events in the artistic and political world, shaped her output.

## Rosa Lee, Barbara Levittoux-Swidarska And Shelagh Wakely: Weathering Is What I Would Like To Do Well

Arusha Gallery, until 28 Aug

Now let's go to the Arusha gallery, which is in Edinburgh's New Town, and a therefore a bit closer to the centre, and near to a number of other Fringe and Festival venues. And what are we there for? Well, it's an exhibition of the work of three fabulous female artists: Polish textile artist Barbara Levittoux-Swidarska (1933-2019), who created avante garde embroidery installations; Rosa Lee (1957-2009), a Hong Kong born creator known for her layered and textured paintings; and Shelagh Wakely (1932-2011), who was active in the British Sculpture Movement of the 1980s.

## WAR STORIES

### Dots And Dashes: A Bletchley Park Musical Army @ The Fringe - Drill Hall, 16-28 Aug

Okay, let's delve into some war stories, which may have the capacity to make us sad, but may also have the capacity to make us smile. I can't help thinking that a brand new musical show like this one might manage the latter. It tells the story of six women working at Bletchley Park during World War Two, detailing their stories of love, loss, secrets and the sacrifices they made as they attempted to protect millions of lives. Delivered by an all-female cast, it promises to be an ode to unsung heroes - as so many in wartime are - and we are expecting good things from it.

### Johnny Got His Gun Zoo Southside, 5-28 Aug

"A grenade hits Joe Bonham in WW1. He wakes up in the hospital to discover his arms, legs, eyes, ears and mouth are gone. Left is



but a torso - the living dead alone with his thoughts. Now he breaks through to be heard". This has got to be a sad one, I am not sure I can see any way round that; it's absolutely an emotionally charged show that will offer an examination of the impact of the First World War on the soldiers who fought it. Based on the 1938 anti-war novel by American writer Dalton Trumbo - and created by Essi Rossi, Johannes Holopainen and Pauli Riikonen - it sees the once-fiercely patriotic soldier questioning the belief that fighting for liberty and democracy was the right thing to do.

### Tempus Fugit: Troy And Us Army @ The Fringe - Drill Hall, 16-28 Aug

Back over to Army @ The Fringe now. Well, the chances of two shows at that venue appearing in a section of war stories were always going to be fairly high. We are returning for a critically acclaimed piece inspired by Homer's 'Iliad' and interviews with contemporary military personnel and their partners, and which presents a really interesting angle on how war affects those involved. "The doorbell rings, a radio crackles - ancient and modern conflicts collide as the wife of a soldier fighting in Afghanistan is plunged into her own memories and into visions of the Trojan War. Tales from antiquity speak to her present and hold the keys to her future".

## NEURODIVERSITY

### Guerilla Autistics Year 8 - Scenes From An Undiagnosed Life

Laughing Horse @ Bar 50, 4-19 Aug

There are way more than three autistic performers appearing at this year's Fringe, of course, and lots of them are women, but we seem to have inadvertently pandered to the stereotype of neurodivergent types being



predominantly male by picking three male acts for this section. They're all great shows by great acts, though, so I won't worry about this too much. Let's instead get on with talking about these three great shows we can look forward to, starting with 'Guerilla Autistics Year 8' by Paul Wady, whose autism went undiagnosed until he was forty one years old. Expect "laughs, tears, obsessions, autism and neurodiversity".

### Joe Wells: I Am Autistic PBH's Free Fringe @ Banshee Labyrinth, 6-28 Aug

I was a fan of Joe Wells long before I knew he was autistic, not least because he's a bit of a veteran of the Fringe. And given that he's a bit of a veteran of the Fringe, you probably know who he is too. Or - if that wasn't previously the case because, I don't know, you're not actually much of a live comedy consumer, or, you know, you've been asleep - well, you will probably know who he is by now

because of his video on 'Having A Brother Who Is Not Autistic', which ended up going viral and clocking up more than two million views. And, as you might expect, given that title, this is "a show about being proud of your weird brain".

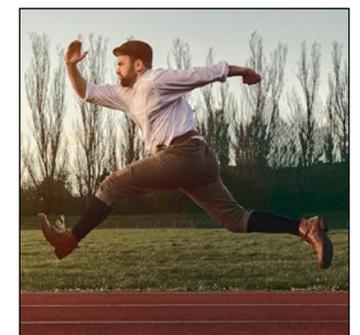
### Ian Lynam: Autistic License Gilded Balloon Patter House, 3-28 Aug

"Most people start comedy because they're funny. Very few have a doctor's note saying they can't be. As an autistic person, Ian's expected to have a gift, but with no skill in counting matches, he's settled on comedy. Thrust into a world that told him he could achieve anything but connecting with people, Ian perseveres. In a stand-up comedy show exploring diagnosis, relationships, sexuality, creativity and the history of autism, Ian sets out to prove autistic people have more to offer than being good at maths". The question is, can he prove it to himself? A show about the expectations, negative and positive, put on autistic people.

## SPORTY STORIES

### Nic Sampson: Marathon, 1904 Pleasance Courtyard, 3-28 Aug

We start quite a few of these sections with a bit of commentary on how there are a plethora of shows at the Festival that fall under the chosen theme, but actually, when it comes to this topic, it's not one that generally throws up a long list of shows. However, there



# TW REVIEWS

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# EDINBURGH 2022

are enough things featuring sporty themes this time to justify some focus and this comedy offering is one of them. It's a really interesting show, this one, from Nic Sampson, because it focuses on a historical sporting event – the 1904 Olympic marathon in St Louis, Missouri, which only fourteen athletes out of 32 managed to finish, for a number of crazy reasons. It's the "incredible true story of one of the dumbest sporting events of all time" and we are intrigued.

## Newcastle United Ruined My Bloody Life

The Stand Comedy Club 2, 4-28 Aug

Let's stick with comedy for the moment, shall we, and head to The Stand to spend an hour with Gavin Webster, who tells the story of his somewhat intensive relationship with a particular football club. "When Gavin Webster was a kid, he liked kings and queens from history, space and the solar system, as well as singing, skipping and running. Then Newcastle United arrived and that was his life effectively over. Obsessed with the team, the players, the results and the club's history, but also obsessed with the supporters, the rude terrace chanting and the moronic subculture that went with football at the time, it ruined his bloody life and still does to this day. This is his story". And we want to hear all about it.

## Ashley Hickson-Lovence & Benjamin Markovits: Staying Ahead Of The Game

EIBF at Edinburgh Art College, 25 Aug

Now that we've seen two high quality comedy shows, let's sprint over to Edinburgh Art College for another date with the lovely Edinburgh International Book Festival. We're going to take in an event with two writers whose novels tackle the world of professional sport. First, Ashley Hickson-Lovence is the creative behind 'Your Show', a portrait of Uriah Rennie, the first (and so far only) black referee in English Premier League football, who comes up against prejudice and over-zealous scrutiny in his journey through the ranks. Hickson-Lovence appears alongside James Tait Black Prize winning novelist Benjamin Markovits, whose early post-graduate career in professional basketball informs his most recent work 'The Sidekick'.

## ONE PERSON SHOWS

### Far Gone

Zoo Southside, 5-20 Aug

We love one person shows here at ThreeWeeks, because of the intimacy and immediacy of them, and also because we are accustomed to seeing so many of them at the Fringe. That being the case, it makes absolute sense to shine a light on them, and we will start with 'Far Gone' at Zoo Southside. It's a Roots Mbili Theatre and Sheffield Theatres co-production set in Northern Uganda and tells a compelling story. "When Okumu's village is attacked by the Lord's Resistance Army, he and his brother's lives are changed forever. 'Far Gone' is a profoundly moving story of a young boy's journey from childhood innocence to child soldier". Expect to be moved.

### A Matter Of Time

C cubed, 3-28 Aug

And on to C cubed and a rather different sort of solo show courtesy of the talented Anjali Singh. This one really called out to me on account of the fact that it's an investigation into the nature of time - Why does time often feel so oppressive? And did it always have to be this way? - and honestly, these are the sort of questions that genuinely keep me awake at night. It's described as "part cabaret



show and part heart-rending personal quest to come to terms with a world in which the clock is always ticking", and it features songs, historical facts, 'Hamilton' references and silliness, all of which sounds very good to us.

### The Ballad Of Mulan Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3-28 Aug

Yes, I will confess that 'Mulan' is one of my favourite Disney films and that perhaps that does play a part in my decision to choose this particular show. But also, I will point out, I knew about the original story of Mulan before I ever saw the film and it's a really fab story already. Which is why I am so pleased to be able to recommend this show, which offers an excellent exploration of war and gender.

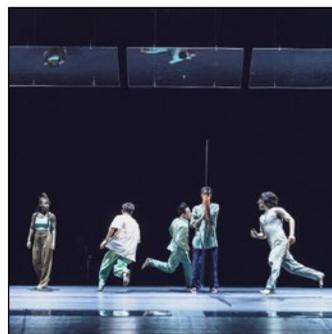
"Woman, warrior, legend. For ten years, Mulan, disguised as a man, fought for the empire, but now that the fighting is nearly over how can she return to her old life and become a woman again? Does she even want to?"

## DANCE SHOWS

### BreAking

Dance Base, 5-14 Aug

We've been tipping the odd dance show as we've gone along with our Threes To See, of course, but we felt that the medium deserved a section of its own, not least because of all the amazing



stuff that's going on at venues like Dance Base. Alas, we can't recommend all of the Dance Base programme here, but do take a look at all their listings if you get a chance. In the meantime, consider seeing 'BreAking' from the Korea National Contemporary Dance Company, which features music by Lee Ilwoo - of the traditional Korean folk, post-rock band Jambinai - plus five contemporary dancers and three top street dancers. It's a great looking show with an equally great message: "Don't fit myself into the world. Do it the other way around!"

### Samsara

The Lyceum, 18-29 Aug

The International Festival always has lots of great dance shows too, of course, and this one is no exception. It's inspired by classic Chinese novel 'Journey To The West', and is the work of UK/ Indian dancer Aakash Odedra and Chinese dancer Hu Shenyuan, who draw on dance traditions from their respective countries to explore samsara: the wheel of life, of birth, existence and re-birth. "Drawing on thinking and imagery at the heart of Buddhist philosophy, 'Samsara's' mythological storytelling merges with personal experience from two globally opposite perspectives, in a seductive, astonishing journey of twin movement".

### Remedy For Memory

Dance Base, 23-28 Aug

Finally, let's head back to Dance

Base for 'Remedy For Memory', which is a rather interesting piece of the sort I feel could beckon in the sort of Fringe-goer as yet inexperienced in the ways of physical theatre. It's a dance theatre experience - a "feminine fantasy" - set in the world of a TV talk show, in which four women explore healing, cosmic wanderings, corporate wellbeing, discovery and desire. "Beautiful people... Have you been seeking, dreaming, of something more, something less, something beyond? Well, you've come to the right place". Amen to that.

## SHOWS WITH MUSIC

### The Gods The Gods The Gods

Assembly Rooms, 4-27 Aug

Although the music strand of the Fringe can seem rather small when compared to the comedy or theatre sections, the sum total of shows involving music in some way across the programme - not to mention all the concerts in the International Festival - mean there is an awful lot of music in Edinburgh each August, making picking just a few shows here very hard indeed. 'The Gods The Gods The Gods' comes from the theatre side of things but is a gig-theatre piece "full of big beats and soaring melodies" as well as spoken word influenced by the likes of Walt Whitman and William Blake. Four Stories are told, and fourteen tracks played, whilst the audience are placed right at the centre of the performance, and we think it sounds thrilling.

### The Village And The Road

Scottish Storytelling Centre - Netherbow, 17-29 Aug

Part of the Made In Scotland showcase, 'The Village And The Road' offers a personal and collective story of rural depopulation, told through theatre, live music and storytelling. "Tom Pow draws on his travels for this emotive journey exploring abandonment of the countryside, refugee crises and the great thinning of the natural world, whilst The Galloway Agreement musicians draw on their wide experience of European musical



traditions, enlarging the emotional landscape and driving the narrative". An important, and poignant, topic.

### Caste-ing

Roundabout @ Summerhall, 3-28 Aug

I suspect there are quite a lot of people who tend to think of music at the Festival largely falling into the category of folk, classical or show tunes. But they'd be wrong to think of it that way, actually, because there are loads of contemporary sounds going on, and 'Caste-ing' is a show offering exactly that, as it features beatboxing, rap, song and spoken word. The show explores the experiences of three black actresses, exposing how they navigate the realities, structures and pressures put on them by the industry. It's an important topic to tackle, this, as the play asks questions about how they can maintain their careers and friendships in a world that seemingly wants to pit them against each other.

## MUSICFUL SHOWS

### Wayne Marshall Plays

Gershwin Usher Hall, 13 Aug

You may well be wondering what we mean by a 'musicful show' and quite how that differs from a 'show with music', so I will make it clear: musicful shows are entirely full of music and are most likely listed under music or opera, whereas a show with music might appear in any section, but still have some music in it. This selection is part



of the International Festival's very good line up of music shows and features the excellent pianist, conductor and composer Wayne Marshall, who is renowned for his ability to blend classical music and jazz. This festival he'll be playing Gershwin, so you can look forward to an evening of American classics.

### Six Stories theSpace @

Symposium Hall, 8-18 Aug

You probably couldn't get a starker contrast with Gershwin than this offering from WeMu,

# THREE TO SEE

a group of artists formed at the Korea National University Of Arts who are dedicated to sharing traditional Korean shamanic rituals with international audiences. 'Six Stories' consists of six songs, each usually used in three specific village rituals from across Korea, and the show unites Korean instruments such as piri and janggu with the violin and keyboard. And the performance, of course, promises to be atmospheric and emotional, an evocation of the country's national heritage.

## Rusalka Festival Theatre, 6-9 Aug

I think it's time for some opera, don't you? For we love opera, here at ThreeWeeks, but of course it doesn't really form a large part of what's on offer at Festival time. You can generally rely on the International Festival for a bit of it, though, so that's where we're headed, to see 'Rusalka' at the Festival Theatre. A new production of Dvořák's best-loved opera featuring Welsh soprano Natalya Romaniw in the title role, it tells the story of a water sprite who sacrifices everything when she falls in love with a human prince, and yes, it was inspired by such stories as 'The Little Mermaid'.

## MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

### OCD Me Hill Street Theatre, 5-28 Aug

We're always glad to see shows looking at mental health issues here at the Fringe, because although those shows can sometimes be a bit emotionally taxing (though they are often also funny and/or uplifting), it's great that they raise awareness of such difficulties, and perhaps help others going through those specific problems. The first show we're going to recommend in this section is 'OCD Me', a one-woman comedy

about living with OCD - written and directed by Aisling Smith - because it looks like it will address the slightly vexing stereotypes we see on TV and in media about how OCD plays out, and that can only be a good thing.

### Headcase Pleasance Courtyard, 3-28 Aug

"Actor and writer Kristin McIlquham can't seem to finish a list. Get an agent. Tick. Get a therapist. Tick. Get a boyfriend... Call her dad. As Kristin approaches 40 she is forced to confront, kicking and screaming, some of the unfinished business in her life and work out why she just can't seem to tie up any of her loose ends". Ooof, this feels too familiar to be honest. But it's an acclaimed play that looks at family, relationships and getting older, and explores



themes of anger, resentment, joy and hopefulness - so we're really going to run the gamut of emotions when we head over to Pleasance Courtyard to see this.

### The Book Of Life Church Hill Theatre, 13-16 Aug

This one is less of a look at individual mental health and more a look at the grieving process and recovery of a nation. During the Rwandan genocide in 1994, one million people were killed in just 100 days. In this International Festival show, Rwandan artist and activist Katese looks back 28

years to ask how it is possible to rebuild a deep understanding of life in the aftermath of a loss so great. It's a show that dwells on life, not loss, and explores resilience, reconciliation and healing, and features Ingoma Nshya, the internationally acclaimed Women Drummers of Rwanda.

## MUSICAL COMEDY

### Alex MacKeith: Thanks For Listening Underbelly Bristo Square, 3-28 Aug

We're back to things musical now, but this time we are parked squarely in the comedy zone, because we're here to see comedy types who just happen to do songs. This kind of show isn't necessarily every comedy lover's cup of tea, but there's quite a lot of them to choose from, and clearly there are also loads of people whose cup of tea is exactly this. First up is Alex MacKeith, acclaimed up and comer, who makes his Fringe debut this year with 'Thanks For Listening'. "Join Alex and his guitar and hopefully other audience members on an acoustic odyssey of songs that are playful, dark and maximum three minutes long. If you're looking for a sexy, confident musical comedian, by all means please find one and bring them to this". Ha ha.

### Jenny Bede: The First Pregnant Woman In The World Underbelly Bristo Square, 3-29 Aug

"You won't have had children yet, as Jenny is the first person to ever go through this particular ordeal, but you might be keen to learn a little something about this incredible new process". Jenny Bede first caught our attention back at the 2015 edfringe with a show called 'Don't Look At Me' and a performance that our reviewer labelled a "unique delight" on

account of her lovable, funny, conversational style and down to earth persona. So, of course, we want to see any new show of hers, especially one that deals with this entirely new process of having a baby, which we would otherwise know nothing about.

### Katie Pritchard: Disco Ball Pleasance Courtyard, 3-29 Aug

Are you telling me you can resist a show with 'Disco Ball' in the title?



No, I bet you can't. And I expect you'll be even more tempted when I tell you that the performer behind it is very critically acclaimed on account of her being super talented, inventive and hilarious. And you'll no doubt be even more drawn in when you read all this info about the show: "Party with carnage-wielding, mayhem-manifesting, award-winning, human disco ball Katie Pritchard, in her debut musical-comedy hour, as she tries to figure out 'who she is' while possibly dressed as a pavlova". Come on, a pavlova. Honestly, who could resist that?

## LIFE EXPERIENCES

### Illegally Funny Laughing Horse @ Cabaret Voltaire, 4-28 Aug

The Fringe is full of people telling life stories, whether it's their own or someone else's, whether true, embroidered or false, so I think it's time to honour that particular



type of show. They occur all over the Festival, in fact, in every kind of genre, but our first pick for this section is from comedian Sid Singh, who returns to Edinburgh to explore "what it means to actually be smart by making you laugh at the crazy things he did and the amazing things you did since the last time he was at the Fringe". Expect to hear about his work as a refugee lawyer and advocate, his anti-vaxxer girlfriend, about helping to beat Donald Trump in court, and arguments with his former gang member turned cancer scientist and climate change sceptic father. Phew, a lot to take in.

### Breathless Pleasance Courtyard, 3-29 Aug

"What happens when the things we covet hide us from ourselves? Opening up to new experiences in her late 30s, Sophie is exploring long repressed sides of herself. When a secret she's keeping from those she loves, and even from herself, threatens to unravel it all, she has to make a choice. Who or what will she decide to give up?" A play by Plymouth Laureate Of Words Laura Horton about her own experiences of a hoarding disorder. As well as writing the play, she's also been working with Hoarding UK and Life Pod, and will be releasing a podcast soon in which she speaks to different people about their experiences of hoarding behaviours, so look out for that too if it's a topic that's of interest.

# TW WEEKLY

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# EDINBURGH 2022

## **Jon Courtenay: Against The Odds Gilded Balloon at the Museum, 3-14 Aug**

You may be aware of Jon Courtenay from his triumphant appearance on 'Britain's Got Talent', but what you may not know is that while he was forging his TV success he was also battling for his life. In this show he combines music, comedy and drama to tell that story. "Accompany him backstage as he wrestles jokes and jeopardy to survive not only the competition but also to just... survive. Doctors and nurses, judges and jokers, all become players in Jon's musical journey through jubilation, heartache, tumours and television. Reminding you that laughter can be the best medicine, but so can immunotherapy".

## **INTERESTING COMEDY THEMES**

### **Njambi McGrath: Black Black Pleasance Courtyard, 3-28 Aug**

I love comedy, and - as someone who gets to write about comedy - I have to say I love a comedy show



with an interesting theme. Because, you know, I love a comedian who just tells a string of jokes, but there's honestly not much to write about if you find yourself penning a one hundred word tip about that kind of comedian's routine. So here are a few comedians doing comedy shows with a genuine hook, starting with Njambi McGrath, whose show this year scrutinises the life of her grandmother, whose entire existence was determined by British occupation in Kenya, and which compares events of the past with what's happening in the present.

### **Ted Hill: All The Presidents Man Just The Tonic at The Mash House, 4-28 Aug**

Next up is Ted Hill, whose show 'All The Presidents Man' might have been quite at home in our previous section on mental health, as - in this debut stand-up show - he talks about every single US president and their role in saving

his life. "From Washington to Biden, Ted talks about his recovery from mental breakdown and includes a joke about each and every US president. It's just your standard coming-of-age, multimedia, mental health recovery, every single US president sort of stand-up show we're all so used to these days". Expect silly graphs, silly drawings, silly jokes and more.

### **I Miss Amy Winehouse Paradise In The Vault, 6-28 Aug**

I miss Amy Winehouse too, and that's why I've been wanting to see this show ever since I saw that it was playing venues in London earlier this year. So obviously I now want to recommend it to edfringe audiences. It's a first solo hour from writer, comedian and journalist Suchandrika Chakrabarti, a regular writer on BBC Radio 4's 'The News Quiz', and a Funny Women semi-finalist. It's eleven years since the singer passed away, and it sounds like Chakrabarti - who spent lots of time partying in Winehouse's Camden stamping ground - can't get over the fact that she never met her hero. I got pretty close to her one time, but then got overcome with morning sickness and had to go home. Anyway, go see this show.

## **AGEING CONCERNS**

### **The Not So Ugly Duckling: A Play For Grownups Scottish Storytelling Centre - Netherbow, 11-27 Aug**

A lot of Fringe stuff focuses on youthful people and is presented by younger performers, so let's starve them of attention for a moment and talk about older people instead, and shows that deal with topics pertinent to the concerns of more mature generations. And who knows, they might appeal to the younger market too. 'The Not So Ugly Duckling' is literally a play for grown ups, and it focuses on two older women who, in retelling a familiar tale, find dark places and unanswered questions, but come to celebrate the pains and joys of lives well-lived. Part of the Made In Scotland showcase, it's written and performed by Maria MacDonell and Jo Clifford.

### **Probably The Last Chance To See Susan Morrison**

The Stand's New Town Theatre, 4-28 Aug

To be clear, I'm not sure whether this is in fact the last opportunity

to see this writer, broadcaster and comedian perform, but the title definitely reflects the age-related concerns of the content of the show. "Susan Morrison is at an age and stage to get some funny stuff off her chest. Mid-life crisis? Nah. This definitely isn't the middle of her life, but she's still having a laugh. She survived the Cold War, shoulder pads and the Osmonds, but time marches on and it turns out the end might be sooner than expected, although she's determined to breathe long enough to get her bloody pension. It's been a funny old life and there's a few things she's learned along the way she'd like to pass on". Why not head over to the New Town to find out what they are?

### **The Rest Of Our Lives Summerhall, 16-28 Aug**

"The Rest Of Our Lives' is a joyful morning dose of dance, theatre, circus and games. A cabaret of life and near death. Two middle-aged lives in an eclectic, spontaneous, predictable and random decline. Jo is an old dancer, George an old clown. International artists with 100 years of life experience between them, armed with a soundtrack of floor-fillers, a book of raffle tickets and a sprinkling of eco-friendly optimism". A fabulous sounding show from the dance, physical theatre and circus programme, here as part of the This Is Wales In Edinburgh showcase, that promises



to be celebratory, hilarious and joyful. "It's the beginning of the end. But we're still here".

## **LOVE STORIES**

### **Confetti Assembly George Square, 3-29 Aug**

I have to say, if you'd ever told me that I'd create an edfringe Three To See section focused on love stories I'd have laughed in your face, because I'm one of those people who'd like you to think they're a hard-ass that doesn't have time for such fluff. However, this particular theme has this year generated a few picks that are a bit unusual and not necessarily, you know, sappy. This one's a queer romcom from



Will Jackson and follows Felix - "uptight and unlucky in love" - who is 'mate of honour' for his best friend's wedding, from surprise hen night to wedding reception, as he finds himself pursuing a romance of his own. Will definitely be hilarious.

### **My (Unauthorised) Hallmark Movie Musical C aquila, 3-21 Aug**

"How long has it been since you've enjoyed a truly romantic experience? Admit it; we are suckers for a story with romance. 'My (Unauthorized) Hallmark Movie Musical' discovers a writer who dreams herself awake and rediscovers romance in a non-conventional way". One for fans of musicals - especially, I think, for those musical fans with a knowledge and/or appreciation of the genre of filmed romance. It's a one woman show that makes use of both film and live theatre, and promises to take you - via the medium of cliché singing and dancing rom-com movie characters - on a fun and frivolous journey to where love always wins.

### **The Cloud And The Man EIFF at Filmhouse, 13+18 Aug**

For our final love based event, we're headed back to the Edinburgh International Film Festival for the screening of a film that fits the romantic bill here, but in a slightly... well, different way. It's an Indian film - a first feature by 30-year-old Abhinandan Banerjee - that tells the story of office worker Manik, who at the start of the film lives with his sick father, but is given notice to leave his home when his dad passes away. As his world seems to be falling apart, his luck changes, and a cloud starts following him, and yes, you guessed it, this is the tale of the love between a man and a cloud. And I think it sounds incredibly charming.

## **CHARACTER COMEDY**

**Christopher Bliss: Captain Words Eye Pleasance Courtyard, 3-28 Aug**  
It's nearly all over, folks. We've

nearly reached the end of our Three To See preview picks for the Edinburgh Festival 2022, but before we go, let's just do a few more comedy shows - not least because comedy is the biggest bit of the programme - and let's make them character comedy tips, because there's loads of that kind of comedy on offer. First up, highly acclaimed creation Christopher Bliss, Shropshire's worst writer, "pulls on his socks and sandals, irons his shell suit windbreaker, combs his curtains, and leaves Shropshire for the fifth time in his life to bring his fifth show to the Edinburgh Fringe". And it will, I guarantee you, be fun.



### **Richard David-Caine: Tall Dark and Anxious Underbelly Cowgate, 4-28 Aug**

Now over to Underbelly Cowgate for an hour with Four Screws Loose alumnus Richard David-Caine - who has been on the telly in things like 'Horrible Histories', 'Class Dismissed' and 'People Just Do Nothing' - and who promises to deliver us some high octane character comedy, so he'd frankly better follow through with that. It's directed by Matthew Floyd Jones of Frisky & Mannish fame, which is a definite point in this show's favour, and the blurb says we can expect "outlandish characters, original songs, and daring insights into the actor behind all the faces", so I'm very much prepared to give this one a shot.

### **Angelos Epithemiou: Can I Just Show You What I've Got? Monkey Barrel Comedy, 12-18 Aug**

We're at the very, very last tip now, and it seems entirely fitting that the very last tip of all - and the final tip of the character comedy section - should be for an absolute cult favourite (it's not just me who thinks he's a cult favourite, it says so in his blurb) and "unwitting star" of 'Shooting Stars', 'Dave's One Night Stand' and Channel 4's 'The Angelos Epithemiou Show'. "Angelos is here standing in front of people for about seven days, maybe more if he can get time off at the stables. Come and see him talk and prepare his speech for the UN". So there you have it. Don't miss him - he's only on for a week.

## Introducing TW Backstage

ThreeWeeks has been covering the Edinburgh Festival since 1996 - and across those more than 25 years of coverage, a key aim of the TW team has been to champion and support the Fringe community, and especially new and alternative theatre, comedy and cultural talent.

Editorially - while we have also interviewed and reviewed bigger name performers - our mission has always been to find the newer and lesser known acts and shows. And as we have grown to cover great theatre, comedy and culture all year-round via our ThisWeek Culture website and bulletin, the Edinburgh Fringe has remained a really important place for us to discover and first experience that newer and lesser known talent.

What makes the Edinburgh Fringe so brilliant is that anyone who can find a room in the city during August can be part of the Festival. And while we know producing



and performing at the Fringe is as challenging as ever - and the more established side of the Festival often grabs many of the headlines - the most exciting experience possible in this city in August is still when you randomly find that new performer or new show that you would never have seen anywhere else, and in doing so you discover a new long-term favourite.

The TW team have also been involved in various initiatives over the years to champion and support the Fringe community in other ways - and this summer we are launching a brand new programme that will do that on a regular basis.

TW Backstage is a new series of podcasts, blog posts and events that will support the Fringe community and those embarking on a career in theatre, comedy or the wider cultural industries.

We already do all this in the music community via our other media CMU, which has long provided

educational guides, podcasts, seminars and events all about the business of music, helping music people to navigate and understand the music industry. Through TW Backstage we will do the same for the Fringe community, helping them to navigate the business of theatre, comedy and culture.

The TW Backstage podcast will launch during the Festival. It will include a series of conversations we recorded at the Cambridge Sound + Vision festival earlier this year, plus some new interviews from the Edinburgh Fringe itself. Topics we will cover include...

### COMEDY CAREERS AND THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

There has been a long debate about the pros and cons of pursuing a comedy career through Edinburgh's big festival. As the Fringe returns to normal following the COVID pandemic, what role does the Fringe play in the business of comedy and for those pursuing comedy careers? We ask a team of experts.

with **Darrell Martin** from Just The Tonic, comedy PR expert **Flick Morris**, comedian **Kate Smurthwaite**, and **Lee Griffiths** from Soho Theatre.

### PURSUING A CAREER IN COMEDY IN 2022

What does a career in comedy look like in 2022? How do early-career comedians go about finding an audience for and building a business around their comedy? And what business partners will they work with along the way? What are the different ways that comedy creators can generate income around their work - and what are the key legal considerations?

with **Darrell Martin** from Just The Tonic, comedy PR expert **Gaby Jerrard**, **Hils Jago** from Amused Moose, and **Raffaella De Santis** from law firm Level.

### PODCASTS, PATREON, YOUTUBE, TIKTOK + BEYOND - MAKING COMEDY ONLINE

What online platforms are now part of the comedy making toolkit? And how can those platforms be used - to deliver content, to grow audiences, to generate revenue and to evolve the artform? We learn from the experts.

with comedian and YouTuber **Jay Foreman**, **John Harris** from Acast, **Lola Oyewole** from TikTok, and **Tom Brandt** from NextUp Comedy.

### COMEDY AND LIVESTREAMING - WHAT NEXT?

Lots of comedians had to quickly learn how to deliver their acts online when the COVID pandemic shut down the comedy clubs and art centres more or less overnight. What worked? What didn't work? And with live in-person shows now back up and running, where will livestreaming fit into the comedy mix long-term?

with **Kaiya Milan** from The Floor, comedy creators and performers **Robyn Perkins** and **Pete Heat**, and **Tom Brandt** from NextUp Comedy.

### YOU'VE DONE EDINBURGH - WHAT NEXT?

So you've performed a show at the Edinburgh Fringe, what now? For many people a Fringe show is a stepping stone to grow their cultural career or business, with the plan to take that show beyond Edinburgh, or to use the contacts made and experienced gained to find new opportunities or pursue new projects. Based on new interviews recorded at the Festival, we'll provide some practical tips on what to do next.

Look out for all these podcasts plus new blog posts and upcoming events online at [ThisWeekCulture.com/backstage](https://ThisWeekCulture.com/backstage)

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Published by UnLimited Media, part of 3CM UnLimited | [3CMunlimited.com](https://3CMunlimited.com)

© 3CM Enterprises Ltd, Kemp House, 152 City Road, London EC1V 2NX

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Printed by Newsquest Media Group | Distributed by Door To Door Delivery

# TW BACKSTAGE

Navigate the business of theatre, comedy and culture with regular guides, podcasts and events at [ThisWeekCulture.com/backstage](https://ThisWeekCulture.com/backstage)



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