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COMEDY

Terry Alderton CKP by Arrangement With Tim Payne

Terry Alderton is many people in one man. He is the Jack of all traits, wanting for none. This short show seems to last mere minutes as he rushes through impression after impression, imitating everything from comedians to helicopters to dogs chasing toffee. Some of his jokes work, some of them don't, but like a true master of the stage he gets to know his audience (sometimes intimately as one gentleman in the front row found out) and find their funny-bone. His vocal abilities are astonishing and he has a talent for physical comedy to match; he is a human juke-box, beat-box and jack-in-the-box. He is an absolute pleasure to watch, even more so to listen to: he is unmissable. Pleasance Dome, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 9.20pm (10.15pm), £5.00 - £10.50, fpp 130. [cnm] tw rating 5/5

Reginald D Hunter: Trophy Nigga Mick Perrin for Just for Laughs Live

The Georgia born and bred Reginald D Hunter is a joyous, raucous, bolshie stand-up whose set ranges all the way from un-PC to offensive. It covers all the most volatile topics, including use of the word "nigger". cyber-bullying, women, stupid people and conservatives (audience participation included). Hunter doesn't mince words, but he does revel in them, and his idiomatic Deep South accent carries his palpable enthusiasm. Is there an over-arching theme? It could be something to do with how being bullied makes you tougher, but he bounds through topics with such delight, recounting anecdotes with such energy that we are swept along too. Those with white middle-class guilt and easily offended sensibilities beware, you are Hunter's prime targets.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 29 Aug, 8.00pm (9.00pm), £12.00 - £14.00 fpp 113. [ve]

tw rating 4/5

Footlights In 'Good For You' Cambridge Footlights

From a scene depicting an MTV-inspired law court to a wholesome, all American family band, this high paced and original sketch show confirms all expectations of the Cambridge Footlights, and proves that this vear's incumbents at least deserve their status as the most renowned of the student sketch troupes. The risqué yet well-pitched humour entertains the diverse audience, and is effectively construed through an innovative array of material, including smaller sketches, musical comedy and the occasional video projection alongside the main sketches. The characters depicted are instantly identifiable, rendered all the more comical by the actors themselves, as rappers and streetwise teens are rendered caricatures by their awkward Oxbridge counterparts. Cheek-achingly funny



SNAP OF THE DAY: ThreeWeeks columnist Laura Mugridge inside her own little Fringe venue, Joni the campervan. See Laura at the Pleasance Courtyard and read her column in the ThreeWeeks weekly edition. Photo: James Robertson

Jack Whitehall: Learning Difficulties Chambers Management

At a youthful 22, Jack Whitehall is becoming a familiar face because of his many TV panel show appearances, and is establishing himself with his frantic energy and forced indignation. It is with this same vigour that he delivers his live performance and it does not disappoint. Whitehall's amazing confidence carries his routine, as his skin-tight jeans seem to be constantly striding from one side of the stage to the other. The show's most fertile ground has to be the comedian's approach to his drama school days and his achingly funny tirade towards a particular classmate who constantly stole his limelight, one Robert Pattison. Though he may never best R-Patz in the fame stake Jack's venues will undeniably get bigger as this is accomplished, quality comedy.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 29 Aug (not 16), 7.15pm (8.10pm), £8.50 - £11.50, fpp 74. [ta] tw rating 4/5

The Late Night Gimp Fight!

By the time you're sitting down, you've realised the zipped up bags on stage are full of human, and you know this will be interesting. The five gimps are strapping lads with amazing singing voices and great physicality, and the multimedia interludes splicing gimps into

ing singing voices and great physicality, and the multimedia interludes splicing gimps into iconic films are hilarious. I was disappointed, however, to find that many of the sketches were university revue standard: some recurring punchlines are bland and visible for miles, there is much nudge-nudge, wink-wink at the audience, and the gimp theme seems to be an excuse to air jokes that are just off, not edgily risqué. Still, they can do some truly amazing things with hoodies, and the audience loved it.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 29 Aug (not 18), 11.00pm (12.00am), £7.50 - 10.00, fpp 86. [ve] tw rating 4/5

Mark Watson – Do I Know You? Phil McIntyre Management

The show's opening is refreshingly inspired as, via a laptop and a projected computer screen, Watson warms up his crowd with guips and astute observations about his arriving audience. A veteran of the Edinburgh Festival, Watson has come a long way since his famous 24 hour show in 2004 and six years later he is an incredibly entertaining performer. He's enamoured with life (and death), and his resulting approach turns up all manner of diverse, unlikely themes, ranging from Lemons to fatherhood, each anecdote flowing effortlessly between his rapid fire jocular audience banter. His fast paced incessant chatter carries you on a wave of good humour, making you laugh so hard and so long you may leave with a sore throat. Assembly Hall, 5 - 30 Aug (not 16, 23), 10,30pm (11.30pm), £15.50 - £18.50, fpp 94. [ta] tw rating 5/5

5 /

suggests a gambol through something that we are told "everybody likes". Despite the opening pleasantries and a warm introduction, there is nothing 'forward' about this show. Sure, some of the comedians demonstrate moments of genuine smartness that have you truly enjoying yourself, but what begins as an amenable romp soon starts to deliver a crash-course in depravity, founded on a curriculum of base humour that feels utterly recycled. The only comedian with any sardonic bite had potential, but sadly represented a stereotype of a gay man making jokes about being gay. Sometimes I felt like I was laughing just because I felt awkward. Slapdash.

Downstairs At The Tron, 5 – 29 Aug (not 16), £5.00, fpp 121. [mb] tw rating $2\!\!/5$

The Dog Eared Collective's 'Joyride'

Having previously graced the Fringe with its presence, this 'comedy quintet' from Leeds is once again back for the ride. In this year's show, the collective provides an entertaining and amusing hour with sketches such as the hilarious (and very unusual) Morris dancing with missiles; there is also a recurring sketch about falafel that can only be meant for an Edinburgh audience. 'Joyride''s light tone and silly humour makes it easy to watch, and the energy from the cast is unbelievable! Fun for everyone – get on board and buckle your seatbelt!

 Canongate Kirk (Venue 60) www.scwe.vpweb.co.uk

 Tickets £7/£5
 0131 226 0000, online or on the door

 19 and 20 August 2010 – 5pm

Pleasance Dome, Aug 4 – 30 (not 16), 3.50pm (4.50pm), £7.50 - £10.00, fpp 64. [lvs]

tw rating: 4/5

Sex and Hugs and Forward Rolls

Really Lovely Comedy/James Acaster, Andrew Doyle, Ben Van der Velde

You'd be forgiven for thinking this show is soft, feathery and gently amorous; the title

Underbelly, Cowgate, 5 – 29 Aug (not 18), 3.10 pm (4.00 pm), £6.50 - £10.00, fpp 56. [cc]

tw rating 3/5



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Daniel Rigby - Afterbirth

Mick Perrin for Just for Laughs Live

Having recently witnessed Rigby's admirable titular performance as the 'Count of Monte Cristo' on-stage, the standards for his foray into comedy were set very high. Commendably, his comedy is as slick as his stage play. A man of evident versatility, his wryly bemused expressions are paired with a whispery tone that has him seeming always on the verge of a laughing fit. The material, centring on religious confusion and "uberstitous" fascination, merges the philosophical pedantry of Richard Dawkins, and the guizzical perplexity of an imaginative child. Discussing bored ghosts resorting to domestic rearrangements, and Noah's struggles with ark construction whilst procreating at the tender age of five hundred, 'Afterbirth' is an enthralling debut, and a definite must see

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16), 7.15pm (8.15pm), £7.00 - £9.50, fpp 52. [np] tw rating 4/5

Topical Storm

Jem Brooks/Laughing Horse Free Festival With an upbeat style accompanied by some sarcastic remarks, Jem Brooks created a show that was sadly just average. Most of his comedy was improvisation, based on audience response, and dealt with politics, countries and social classes, but I would have preferred to hear more of his witty, more polished material than his more off-the-cuff-stuff. Given his fast response to his crowd when improvising. Brooks' style was clearly aimed at the younger audience, and it created an environment resembling that of a university party, which has its own appeal. Needless to say it will be a different experience every day, and though not for me, I would recommend it for people who enjoy improvisational comedy about politics and the mainstream media.

Espionage, 5-29 Aug, 4.00pm (5.00pm), free, fpp 135. [ssg] tw rating 3/5

Simon Munnery: Self-Employed

Simon Munnery/The Stand Comedy Club

Simon Munnery's new show is hilarious. In trademark shambolic style, Munnery appears to have cobbled together three main sections beginning with the sketch 'La Concepta', which sees him playing a disastrous French waiter, and showcases his usual ingenious wordplay with a touch of slapstick. Then he cuts to a video where he mumbles to himself, "I'm insane, I'm insane, I'm in Sainsbury's" before starting on his 'real' set. No one can help liking Munnery's seemingly disorganised persona, or his sharply intelligent ramblings so softly bundled up with wit. A truly unique and brilliant performance from one of the Fringe's finest.

The Stand Comedy Club, 6 - 30 Aug (not 16), 3.40pm, £7.00 - £10.00, fpp 123. [cc] tw rating 4/5

The Ballad Of Backbone Joe Suitcase Royale An opera show that brings together comedy, music and great acting in a junkyard deserves my respect. Backbone Joe is accused of the murder of Messy Dimes Dan, the owner of a boxing business, and his story is retold in action and music by Suitcase Royale. The members of this quirky music trio use spoons as drumsticks and luggage as a banjo, but what was most impressive was that the comedy was so vividly present in the physicality of the show, and with much direct conversation with the audience, all three of the main actors certainly knocked the fourth wall down throughout the play. For anyone looking to be entertained with fluid moves a little like that of

Fred Astaire, 'The Ballad of Backbone Joe' is

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 29 Aug (not Aug 16),

2.35pm (3.35pm), £8.50 - £11.00, fpp 31. [ssg]

the show to see.

tw rating 5/5

Four Screws Loose Present 'Latecomers Will-Be-Shot'

Four Loose Screws Loose/ PBH's Free Fringe Four guys who are not afraid of their sexuality make this a pretty scandalous show! The hour of sketches includes several skits where the performers introduce different plots in a slapstick style. One of the best was the opening, with a man dressed as 'a gay' and a bossy photographer who insists a couple pose in the most ridiculous of ways. Another good sketch was a conversation between two guys and a policeman, which was sung using Enrique Iglesias' pop ballad 'Hero'. Four loose screws disguised as four dashing men should never be turned down. It's Saturday Night Live but at the Fringe!

Bannermans, 8 - 27 Aug (not 14, 21), 4.15pm (5.15pm), free, fpp 63. [ssg] tw rating 4/5

Hey You, Watch This!

Alex Perry & Karel Hutter/PBH's Free Fringe

Free events are always going to feel like a gamble, but the potential for finding hidden gems is there; sadly 'Hey You, Watch This' was not one of them. With a selection of bad puns and self-ridicule that was actually offensive, this show was essentially awkward at best. No hard feelings are meant toward the comedians, but their material just lacked any sort of substance, and the atmosphere wasn't improved by the predominately bolshie audience. It's sad and significant that the funniest part of the show was when the compère told a heckler to shut up as they were ruining their punch line. There are some good free shows at the Fringe but unfortunately this wasn't one of them.

Base Nightclub, 7 – 21 Aug, 7.30pm (8.00pm), free non-ticketed, fpp 69. [aq]

tw rating 1/5

Chris Corcoran - What Goes On Tour, Stays On Tour

Chris Corcoran

When it comes to stand up comedy, Chris Corcoran is a master at improvisation. Whether speaking to the audience about his embarrassing moments or just making fun of his Canadian friend, Corcoran is a fast thinker and can make anyone laugh about the silliest things. Happily the audience was willing to try the social experiments that were part of his show – such as practicing various British and European ways of saying hello to a stranger - and though some of the Welsh slang jokes were perplexing, in the end he got the message across. Besides his being a cute guy with blue eyes, Corcoran's enthusiasm made it easy for the audience to enjoy his seemingly spontaneous style and creatively random content. Le Monde, 6 - 30 Aug, 6.45pm (7.45pm), £5.00, fpp

44. [ssg] tw rating 4/5

DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

The Six-Sided Man

Company Gavin Robertson

Here we have an entertaining and intriguing script badly flattened by the direction. Rhinehart's novel, 'The Dice Man', offers topical characters and a fascinating plot, so I feel that this staging represents a missed opportunity. The characters feel under-researched, especially the doctor's patient: Where are the signs of madness in this actor's body and voice? The only physical demonstrations of a character's state-of-mind are done through me, and though this does fit the plot

actors were pushing the comedy element too hard. Overall it seemed that the director preferred to advance a stylistic choice rather than create dramatic tension, and as a consequence, reduces the climax of the show (the murder) to an action without power. The Zoo, dates vary, 12.30pm (1.40pm), £9.00 -£11.00, fpp 154. [ga] tw rating 2/5

EVENTS

Discover Edinburgh's Old And New Towns Saints And Sinners Walking Tours

This is a walking tour with bit of a difference. Whilst you'll still get your quota of Edinburgh history, Saints and Sinners aim to bring the past alive with storytelling and some audience participation. Our guide had a great line in patter and was a mine of information when it comes to the curious traditions of the city. Along the way, he also pointed out free attractions and had lots to say about the various museums, so the tour could help inform the rest of your visit. Sometimes the historical side of things needed to be clearer, but this is a good walk that goes a little way off the beaten track, ideal if you want to look beyond the Royal Mile.

Outside Ryan's Bar, 2 Hope Street, Aug 3-5, 9-13, 16-20, 23-27, 30-Sep 3, 10.30am (12.30pm), £7.50-£8.50, fpp 158.

MacDonald Holyrood Hotel, 81 Holyrood Road, dates as above, 13:30 (15:30), £7.50-£8.50, fpp 158. [crc]

tw rating 3/5

THEATRE

Sticks, Stones, Broken Bones

Bunk Puppets and Scamp Theatre In this brilliantly performed and outrageously inventive shadow puppetry show, Jeff Achtem transforms gloves, wigs and bits of paper into wonderful and wacky comic vignettes that have to be seen to be believed. A balloon and some cardboard becomes an old woman watching a horror film in terror; a mad doctor is made from a mop and a teddy bear; a couple play chess and blow their tongues out at each other through an ingenious contraption strapped to Achtem's chest; and an audience member fights a metre-high ninia on stage. Achtem gives voice to these hilarious characters in a consummate performance that is charming, quirky and original - one of the most innovative and fun shows on the Fringe.

Underbelly , Cowgate, 5 -29 Aug (not 17), 2.00pm, £6.50 - £10.50, fpp 291. [mm]

tw rating 5/5

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

3BUGS Fringe Theatre

If you go to this show expecting a re-imagining of Brecht's play centred on the use of puppetry, you will be disappointed; there is only one puppet (quite predictably, the child), and it's manipulated poorly. However, this is a fast-paced performance by a cast boasting some genuine talent. and their interaction with the audience is pleasant and gives rise to humour and chuckles. The direction, which is inspired at parts, sadly fails to allow moments of emotional climax to blossom, and brushes over them at the same pace as everything else. Moreover, the occasional mention of the war in Irag is an under-exploited attempt at imbuing the production with contemporary political relevance. Most of the good ideas here are in need of further development. The Zoo, 6 – 30 Aug (not 17), 6.30pm (7.45pm), £6.50

Flesh and Blood and Fish and Fowl Barrow Street Theatre

Stumbling out of St Stephen's Church, most people seemed not to know what to think of this two-hander from New York-based Barrow Street theatre - critics included. For me, it was astonishing theatre, hilarious, surreal, madly beguiling and wonderfully put together. A sort of screwball cross between 'The Office' and 'Little Shop of Horrors', with Lars von Trier's 'Antichrist' thrown in. the show enacts an end of the world scenario, in which a mundane modern workplace is slowly pulled apart by the unflinching power of Mother Nature. A breathtaking treatise on humanity's place in the world, perhaps, or a meditation on the absurdity of the modern man? Complete with dazzling effects and the odd stuffed animal, the wild finale is worth the price of entry alone. Fantastic.

Traverse @ St Stephens, 3 - 28 Aug , 7.00pm (8.00pm), £6.00 - £19.00, fpp 252. [ef] tw rating 5/5

An Acre And Change Student Theatre At Glasgow

Two opposing groups want the same piece of land in a hypothetically occupied Cambridgeshire and neither will settle until they get it. This play about conflict begins with a promising opening scene, with the character of Francois perfectly acted: however, the tone of the piece then becomes angry and aggressive, and stays in that vein until the end. At times the dialogue feels contrived and the various accents of the cast created confusion. I felt the piece was lacking in tension and transitions between scenes were stilted; there were also moments where a character would appear in another setting without any justification. The idea of occupation that the production wanted to explore was interesting, but in the end just wasn't well executed . Bedlam Theatre, 9 - 21 Aug (not 15), 10.15am (11.00am), £3.00 - £7.00, fpp 222. [cc] tw rating 2/5

Clint's Reality Aireborne Theatre

This Joe Orton-esque farce features Clint, a major TV mogul who is always up to some dirty trick or other; from rigging votes on his show, to cheating on his wife, to giving his son Ketamine - there really are no limits to which he will not go. Taking place over one evening, the play begins with Clint's career on the verge of collapse and ends when it is pieced back together. Unfortunately what happens in between the beginning of the crisis and its resolution is too long, and I'm afraid, quite dull in parts. There are some amusing moments and the acting is good, but somehow I found that Clint's appearance was more suited to the role than his actual interpretation of it. Underbelly, Cowgate, dates vary, 12.35pm (1.35pm), £6.50 - £10.00, fpp 239. [cc] tw rating 2/5

Kafka And Son Theaturtle/ Threshold Theater Adapted from Franz Kafka's writings, this haunting one-man piece follows the writer as he attempts to understand his turbulent relationship with his dominating father. From its outset, the play displays eerie and haunting undertones, highlighted by the well chosen music. The ingenious use of set items such as a cage, metal fencing and a rusty bed frame mirror the vision of Kafka's entrapment presented in the script: imprisoned by the fear he felt for his father. Alon Nashman delivered a stunning performance, embodying the physically weak, yet intellectually resilient Kafka with every movement. In addition, Nashman's portrayal of Kafka's father, which included a dramatic voice change and exceptional lighting, really brought the conflict between the

The Merry Wives Of Henry VIII

Distractions Theatre Company

There's always a danger that we'll forget the real people in history and will reduce them to easily remembered basics. Richard III was a hunchback, Henry VIII was a fickle playboy. That's exactly what happens in this (deliberately?) overblown destruction of real events. The caricatures are cartoonish and basic, the Tudor court's political scheming (familiar now thanks to Philippa Gregory, Hilary Mantel and HBO's "The Tudors") is non-existent; audiences are familiar enough with the period to deserve better than this. However, the production is a pleasing enough jaunt, which makes villains out of pawns, especially for audiences less familiar with the period However, there's some painfully OTT acting and atrocious lighting choices. Diverting, but ultimately frustrating.

Augustine's, 11 - 26 Aug (not 18, 23), 6.45pm (7.45pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp 271. [rtw] tw rating 2/5

Tales From a House of No Windows Alchemy Troupe

The Alchemy Troupe advise us to 'prepare for bewilderment' in the programme blurb - and they're almost correct. In this first chapter of three, the group establish a grimy setting reminiscent of a nineteenth century London alleyway you'd go out of your way to avoid. A fusion of soft keyboard playing, multimedia and physical theatre is a promising combination, but although the ensemble have good voices and harmonise well, the movement is a bit limp and the weird tales of a vulnerable woman aren't enthralling. Whilst the nighttime, windowless atmosphere tinged only with a candlelit glow is effective in theory, the lukewarm content means it's difficult to focus and the soothing lullabies almost sing you to

sleep. Reasonably pleasant but unaffecting bewilderment. Laughing Horse @ The Three Sisters, 5 – 29 Aug (not 12, 20), 3.45pm (4.45pm), Free Non-ticketed, fpp

294. gjs] tw rating 2/5

Occupied

Everyman Youth Theatre, Cheltenham

The young cast of 'Occupied' brings you toilet humour of an altogether more interesting variety in this series of plays revolving around bathrooms. However, whilst the staging is innovative and the plays snappy, the actors are let down by writing that doesn't quite work either as serious drama or dark comedy. Whilst sketches depicting the behaviour of a group of teenage girls locked in the bathroom at a party are amusing, one feels that the actresses under-perform in these roles by having to play themselves (give or take a few years). Despite this, the acting is frequently good, and the plays refreshing. A show worth watching, if only to see exactly what people do get up to behind closed doors

C aquila, 8 – 14 Aug, 6.10pm, £7.50 - £9.50, fpp 275.

tw rating 3/5

[lw]

THREEWEEKS IN EDINBURGH

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of Billy the Kid

Bedlam Theatre

meets WOODY ALLEN'

(Venue 49) 22:30

Daily printing by Smart Design & Print.

TW RATINGS EXPLAINED: 1/5 BAD | 2/5 MEDIOCRE | 3/5 GOOD | 4/5 VERY GOOD | 5/5 BRILLIANT



two men to life. Bedlam Theatre, 6 - 28 Aug (not 16,17), 2.30pm, £10.00 - £12.00, fpp 263. [sj] tw rating 4/5

