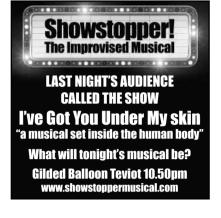
YOUR DAILY SHEET OF EDINBURGH FESTIVAL REVIEWS: #15 FRIDAY 20 / SATURDAY 21 AUG

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CABARET

Circus Burlesque Lola LaBelle's House Of Burlesque

Our host for the evening is the phenomenally talented Tempest Rose who almost steals the show with her own quick wit, sublime stage presence and snap, cackle and jazz singing voice. It is she who introduces the hooting and hollering audience to a tour (de force) of the seven deadly sins, each one represented by a different luscious lady and all are as sinfully enrapturing as the next. The finale by Lola LaBelle is absolutely spellbinding and leaves the audience transfixed, jaws dropped and going straight to hell. Add comedy and contortionists into the mix and this is burlesque as it should be; bold, bawdy and absolutely beautiful, an hour just isn't enough for this festival knockout, a must see

Assembly @ George Street, 5 - 30 Aug (not 23), 9.20pm (10.20pm), £12.00 - £15.00, fpp 45. [ta] tw rating 5/5

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

The Stag King C Theatre

"Hello magic girl!" is how I am greeted as I enter the venue, received by a crowd of bouncy and excitable Magicians, who proceed to narrate an energetically performed tale. A young Prince presented with a magical gift is nastily overthrown, and must strive to win back his kingdom, honour and, of course, his lady. Although it sounds like a stock fairytale, this enchanting tale is refreshingly performed, as bodies roll out of carpets, men turn into Stags and Magicians cough paper streamers. I left the venue with a beaming smile and an infectious good mood which lasted all afternoon. 'The Stag King' is everything a Fringe children's show should be: hilarity and happiness with pure, pure magic.

C, 4 – 30 Aug (not 16), 3.40pm (4.40pm), £5.50 -£9.50, fpp 20 [lvs]

tw rating: 5/5

COMEDY

Some Comedy (In A Horse) PBH's Free Fringe (Gareth Morinan, Daniel Smith, Fred Forse)

This is a galloping, good and gratis evening with three bright young comedians. Gareth Morinan is an expertly awkward compère, mixing politics and whimsy in his drawings and stories such as 'Obama and the Llama'. The frenetic Fred Forse draws some startling parallels between 80's soft-core porn and the Bible, though his material on the Olympics is less strong. But it is Daniel Smith, more fringe than man, whose stand up stands out: from his opener about fourteenth-century philosophy to his languorous lists, Smith manages to be exciting despite exerting less energy than a coma patient. If you're expecting a



SNAP OF THE DAY: Fringe theatre legend Pip Utton guest edits this week's weekly edition of ThreeWeeks, pick up your copy now! Photo: Kate Edwards

genuine horse, you will be disappointed; if it's courageously clever complementary comedy you're after, this is the show for you.

The White Horse, 7 - 28 Aug, 7.45pm (8.45pm), free, fpp 124. [gg] tw rating 4/5

Domestic Goddi Wonderland

Avalon Promotions Ltd

When entering 'Wonderland', the flowery banner and tea-service furniture seems like the domain of a Cath Kidston enthusiast. The trio appear, armed with sketches aplenty, beginning an hour of well crafted and charmingly idiotic segments. Top picks include the depiction of a disappointed manual labourer and his gourmet disenchantment with pie 'n' mash, and the woman's answer to the 'Top Gear' challenge. Smiles and guffaws are widespread, but truly hearty laughter is sadly scarce. The set is pleasant, but mostly tame – like being told a joke by a grandparent, perhaps - and over-polished deliveries reduce the thrill of spontaneity. However, this doesn't tarnish the act, which remains a well conceived and well executed series of sketches.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 – 30 Aug, 2.45pm (3.45pm), £7.00 – £9.50, fpp 56. [np]

tw rating 3/5

guitar lesson and potted history of rock and roll, illustrated with excerpts of songs from each period as well as a couple of his own. This isn't really stand-up as we'd recognise it; rather, it's a collection of his own rockstar anecdotes, from his first guitar to his days in the Fabulous Poodles, which are entertaining and occasionally funny, and the odd impression (including some impressive behind-the-head Hendrix picking). It's a different pace to the rest of the Festival, and perhaps appeals to a specific crowd, but it's no less engaging for this.

Fringe at Le Monde, 6 – 13 August, 1.45pm (2.45pm), £5.00, fpp 117. [tc] tw rating 3/5

The Incident Sam Simmons and David Quirk

Bafflingly brilliant, Sam Simmons and David Quirk manage to take you on the most ridiculous ride of your life. Watch as Dave meets (then molests) Sam for the first time in a shop that apparently stocks nothing but one well used cardboard cut-out of Sarah

Michelle Geller. Then sit back and enjoy the highs and lows of their blossoming bromance. The oddness of the show does take a little getting used to and some of the jokes fail to take flight as plot and continuity are forgotten, jumping from the rapid consumption of sun cream to the art of making miniature walnut

Dommett and Lampaert

CKP by Arrangement with Lisa Thomas Management presents

In a delightfully haphazard and chaotic show, Dommett and Lampaert proved themselves to be fine young comedians. Their humour is perfect for the (predominantly student) audience they play to and in the separate sets they perform each provide the goods. Joel Dommett's material centres on the horrifically pretentious (and horrifically bad) shows he has seen at the Festival something the audience can relate to. Eric Lampaert's set is equally funny, discussing his cosmopolitan upbringing, with a theme of 'Where's Wally?' running throughout (see the show and all will become clear). The most enjoyable element to the evening is the interplay between the pair and their audience, leading to superb banter that was clearly improvised – the sign of a good comedian. Underbelly, Cowgate, 5 - 29 Aug (not 17), 7.50pm (8.50pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp 56. [amb] tw rating 4/5

Adam And Phil – Contains Mild Peril

Adam and Phil/PBH's Free Fringe

As these two grown men entangle themselves in a heap on the floor, all you can think of are naughty schoolboys making only themselves laugh while adults look on with weary disapproval. Adam and Phil take it in turns to introduce one another's stand-up, with a bit of banter (seemingly their favourite word) in between. Goodness knows what goes on in Phil's head to inspire drawings of

Ronnie Golden 'First A Fender' – A Beginner's Guide To Rock

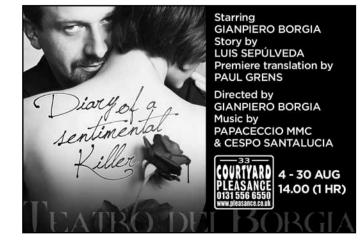
Ronnie Golden uses his first solo show to describe his most enduring love affair – with a guitar. This takes the form of an on-off

men. If you have a penchant for the weird and wonderful, however, then this show is a must.

Assembly @ George Street, 5 - 29 Aug, 4.45pm (5.45pm), £9.00 - £12.00, fpp 71. [gm] tw rating 3/5

cont>>







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cont>> animals made out of household objects, but he is so committed to talking nonsense that you do laugh - mainly out of confusion - while Adam establishes a confident rapport with the audience by leading them through sing-alongs and other schemes. With one quite as bonkers as the other these two make a bizarre double-act. Dragonfly, 7 - 28 Aug (not 9, 16, 23), 3.10pm (4.10pm), free, fpp 21. [lj]

tw rating 3/5

Best of the Five Pound Fringe

Five Pound Fringe

Beginning twenty minutes late, the show continued in a suitably shambolic manner, and it was sad to witness Compere Simon Fielding eventually being reduced to nob gags. James A Caster was an amusing opener, and he managed to assert himself admirably in the few minutes he had on stage, however. Next up was Paul Sweeney, who told a couple of jokes, sang a song, and then was gone. Last was Tom Webb, who was the highlight of the show, interacting with the crowd well. If the truth be told, this still isn't worth five pounds, though; none of the comedians looked like they wanted to be here, using their stage-time to plug their own shows for which, by admission, they were saving their best material

The GRV, 7-29 Aug, 12:20pm (1.20pm), £5.00, fpp 34. [amb]

tw rating 2/5

DANCE AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

Scottish Dance Theatre: NQR and Drift Scottish Dance Theatre

Words fail me as I try to describe 'Drift', the first piece of this double act of contemporary dance which challenges common ideas of what dancing is. In this short, energetic duet with music from A Perfect Circle and Nine Inch Nails, not only do the dancers appear to defy gravity; they shape the space around them and move so fluidly that they seem to melt into the floor. In 'N.Q.R.', a larger ensemble shows that dancing is a broader concept than we think, and that anyone can dance. This touching choreography shows how similar we are despite shallow differences. This is a piece for dance lovers and for those who've never seen a dance show before.

Zoo Southside, dates vary, 7.00 pm (7.50pm), £12.00, fpp. 153. [clm]

tw rating 5/5

EXHIBITIONS

Christen Købke: Danish Master of Light

National Galleries Of Scotland Tucked away in a quiet corner of the National Gallery, this exhibition is a true gem. Købke, one of the leading artists in Denmark's 'Golden Age', is renowned for his depictions of scenes often considered mundane, marking a drastic shift from convention, as well as for insightful portraiture. Here, the focus is on the artist's true skill in capturing the lighting of a spontaneous moment. The exhibition does his fine work justice: each piece is accompanied by detailed descriptions highlighting their key features, and the layout facilitates a comprehensive understanding of his artistic development. As it continues, we are able to grasp how Købke is enmeshed within familiar movements, whilst standing as an individual talent. A truly fascinating find.

MUSIC

Craig McMurdo - The McMurdo Sound Outhouse Productions

The Guardian dubbed him 'smoother than Harry Connick Jr.' and there is no doubt that Craig McMurdo's voice is an absolute delight. McMurdo and his band bring a selection of golden jazz classics to The Outhouse. performing crowd-pleasers such as 'Fly Me To The Moon'. Listening to him sing is truly a pleasure - his energy matches the upbeat songs, and his vocals have a warmth and depth that really brings colour to the slower numbers. The band are of the good, oldfashioned crooner variety; this gig is not the place to go to get your night started, but the songs (think strong Nat King Cole influences) may just bring a tear to your eye. The Outhouse, 23 - 26 Aug, times vary, £13.00, fpp

182. [lw] tw rating 3/5

MUSICALS AND OPERA

Gibby Stone And Her Problem

Infinity Repertory Theatre Company Delusional is perhaps the first word that springs to mind having just witnessed this awful musical based on a young Southern girl who has strange skin. The actors struggled with even the simple characters they had to play, either looking bored, tired or just plain confused. Even more frustratingly, only one of them could hold a tune and none of them seemed able to stand still for more than ten seconds at a time. The band consisted of two guys on guitars who struggled to keep up a basic rhythm: this didn't really matter though as none of the four girls on stage could clap in time to music. A chronically clumsy production that is almost magnificently terrible

Augustine's, 9 - 22 Aug (not 16), 4.40pm (5.40pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp 211. [sj] tw rating 1/5

THEATRE

Considering Georgia O'Keeffe Alison Hetzel (One Voice Productions)

It is unfortunate that this well written piece that looks at the life of American artist Georgia O'Keeffe began with such a poorly constructed slide show presentation. Aiming to give us a flavour of the artist's work, the audience was left questioning the quality of the overall show before the actress even arrived on stage. Alison Hetzel is convincing as the powerful and austere O'Keeffe, but the opening sequence where she changes her appearance to more accurately resemble her idol is awkward and unnecessary. The interesting script is supported by the velvet quality of Hetzel's voice, producing a passionate and energetic piece about love, life and art. Overall a pleasant performance that has just enough spark to make it enjoyable. theSpaces on the Mile @ The Radisson, 6 – 14 Aug (not 8), 1.10pm (1.55pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp 239. [sj] tw rating 3/5

The Mandrake

A story of privileged men conspiring to force an unwilling woman sleep with a man who is not her husband sounds like a tragedy. Unfortunately, this producion of Niccolo Machiavelli's play, written in the early 1500s, is presented as comedy. A titled young man plots to bed the attractive young woman,

once she sleeps with him, she loves it. I felt ill. Inexpertly acted, over-enthusiastically staged and completely bereft of insight, this should have been left in the vault.

Zoo Southside, 6 - 30 Aug, 1.40pm (3.10pm), £6.00 -£8.00, fpp 269. [ve] tw rating 1/5

The Olympic Gene - Free Whirligig Theatre

Few performers would dare attempt a gymnastic routine on the floor of one of the Fringe's more cramped and dank venues - but Becky Brunning's great-grandfather won an Olympic medal for gymnastics in 1912, so she can do anything! We are taken back in time to William Lebeau's triumph, complete with ceremonial spoons, and witness Becky's interesting attempts to get ready to compete at London 2012 and fulfil her own Olympic destiny. While the premise is sweet enough, the execution could be more sophisticated, as it relies heavily on PowerPoint effects and excessive props rather than any real characterisation. Vaguely amusing and touching in places, this show is a valiant effort but won't be winning any medals. Laughing Horse @ The Hive, 12 - 29 Aug (not 14, 15), 12.30pm (1.30pm), free, fpp 276. [lj]

tw rating 2/5

Our Share of Tomorrow Real Circumstance/ York Theatre Royal/ Escalator East to Edinburgh

If you're still looking for that unforgettable Fringe Festival highlight, look no further. Here, we follow the touching drama of three lonely souls, aching for their regretted pasts and striving to find a fragment of solace in each other. I'm not sure who to praise more - Jot Davies for his scarily accurate Monty Python impression, Toby Sawyer for his gutwrenchingly powerful monologue or Tamsin Joanna Kennard, who solicited an almost painful empathy for protagonist Cleo's plight. If this wasn't enough, strikingly eerie songs, original design choices and stylistic motifs gave the play a unique and awe-inspiring guality. A heart-breaking theatrical gem which will deeply move those fortunate enough to witness it

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 – 30 Aug (not 16), 1.00pm (2.15pm), £6.00 - £10.00, fpp 277. [eg]

Singin' I'm No A Billy He's A Tim

Perhaps comparable to the atmosphere of a big football match, there was an expectant buzz in the venue even before this show began, a sense that something unpredictable and important was about to unfold - and it did. The play's premise is this: on the day of an Old Firm match a staunch Celtic supporter is locked up in a cell with a devoted Rangers fan. The stakes are high for both, for as one of them proclaims, "there is more to football than football". Bigotry, rivalry, pride, and issues surrounding national identity crowd into the small room and are excellently explored by truthful, touching, funny performances and highly coloured writing. Relevant, memorable, and emotive, this show both enlightens and entertains. Assembly @ George Street, 5 – 30 Aug (not 24), 3.45pm (5.10pm), £11.50 - £12.50, fpp 288. [dp] tw rating 5/5

Three Men In A Boat Rodney Bewes

Jerome K. Jerome's quintessentially English tale of three men's journey along the Thames is delightfully quaint, with Rodney Bewes presenting its endearing, if slightly unreliable, narrator. It is a complete shambles as he forgets his place, repeats himself and gives out cough sweets to audience members,

remaining truest to the beautiful prose. Edgy theatre this is not, but nothing else on the Fringe is likely to leave you so charmed by a dapper gentleman in exquisite whites, to say nothing of the dog!

New Town Theatre, 5 - 29 Aug (not 16, 23), 5.00pm (6.10pm), £9.00 - £13.00, fpp 296. [lj] tw rating 4/5

Too Middle Class For Chlamydia Chesterlass Productions

Featuring entertaining music and embarrassing stories, this short piece of free comedy is a great way to start the afternoon. Based on the narrator's attempts to find the perfect woman, we are led through his back catalogue of relationship failures, including, as hinted at by the title, his tryst with STIs. The likeable personality of the performer meant that even when the occasional joke fell flat the audience was not left searching for the exit. The comedy songs showed genuine musical talent and added an interesting dimension to the uncomplicated piece. However the overall content was average and has largely been seen before, but for a break from the hectic Edinburgh streets this would be a good port of call.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, 5 - 29 Aug (not 9, 16, 23), 1.30pm (2.00pm), free (non-ticketed), fpp 297. [sj]

tw rating 3/5

Two Bloody Queens Robert Inston is Regina

In this not-quite one-man show. Robert Inston takes on two of history's most famous women, with a little help from an incompetent jester. Performing as Elizabeth I and her royal rival Mary Queen of Scots, Inston captures two psychologically complete characters with distinct strategies and very different fates. Challenging the oversimplified perception of these figures, he tells their stories while pointing to the parallels between their time and ours; to the constants of corruption and politically motivated war. There's some awkwardness in the production; uncomfortable transitions between characters and a general lack of dramatic drive weaken the whole, but there's enough detail to hold this intelligent, satirical character study together. Much more than a mock-Tudor drag act.

Laughing Horse @ Argyle, 5 - 29 Aug, 7.30pm (8.20pm), free non-ticketed, fpp 299. [df] tw rating 3/5

Waiting for Lefty King's Players

The bitter cold of Pleasance Beside suited this bleak presentation of Clifford Odets' examination of inter-war hardships. The taxi business is doing badly and there's a thick atmosphere at the union meeting the audience is forced to join. Seating the audience directly next to the actors created an effective immediacy, but it also meant that their improvised shouts - which lacked conviction - were all too perceptible and the experience quickly became uncomfortable. Overlooking this, there were some striking performances and a resoundingly moving scene where a couple in love are forced to part over economic grievances. The final section was also guite stirring, but it all ended rather abruptly. Bring your coats, scarves and political minds to this mixed venture. Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 30 Aug (not 16, 23), 1.30pm (2.30pm), £5.00 - £8.00, fpp 302. [eq]

Wonderland Work Of Genius Ltd

tw rating 2/5

Behind brilliant minds often lie hidden troubles, alienation and inability to accept reality the way it is. In a new play by Gyles

whilst also inviting us to view the darker side of a perturbed man whose life was a constant struggle against loneliness. Although it is essentially a musical, in places this seems to be a mere joyful cover up of the dark underlying meaning of the play. Assembly @ George Street, 5 – 29 Aug (not 17), 1.45pm (2.15pm), £5.00 - £15.00, fpp 306. [aq] tw rating 4/5

Your Dream Wedding Anything Bloody Goes Are you planning a white wedding? Do you dream of getting married on a beach in Barbados? Or does the thought of tying the knot make you break out in a cold sweat? Never fear: Michael and his assistant Gwendolyn are here to sort out all your wedding worries, so book an appointment at their salon to try on tiaras and learn how to walk like a bride (or groom). This is the perfect premise for a piece of interactive theatre and the performers are brilliant. keeping up a poker-faced camp that means the show treads just the right line between intimacy and hilarity. Whether you're a romantic or a cynic, this is something very

special. Say 'I do'. Assembly @ George Street, 4 - 28 Aug (not 10, 17, 24), times vary, £10.00 - £15.00, fpp 307. [crc]

tw rating 5/5

Dean's Dad's Ducks

Dean Parkin/Escalator East to Edinburgh The poet Dean Parkin tells the story

f his dad's toy ducks and their unlikely trip across the world in this gentle and slightly surreal monologue. Parkin is a talented poet - he has been included in a Forward Anthology - but sadly we only get a handful of poems and only one, 'Bubble Wrap,' stands out. He is a less talented actor and struggles to bring to life a weak script about his 1960s childhood, though describing his neighbours as Fellini characters was eye-catching and his exploration, towards the end, about truth and lies in story-telling was more interesting. Reminiscent of John Hegley, he has a charmingly fun style, but perhaps he should have stuck with the poetry.

Zoo Southside, 6 - 30 Aug, 5.15pm (6.15pm), £5.00 -£8.00, fpp 242. [mm] tw rating 3/5

Joe Power - The Man Who Sees Dead People Norwell Lapley Productions

Maybe he's having an off day or maybe the dead aren't particularly talkative, but middleof-the-road medium Joe Power seems to be struggling. Transmitting vague messages and hoping for the best, he's met with blank stares and awkward silences as the show starts, only hitting his stride after some creative interpretation. 'Does anyone have a connection to a hospital?' he asks the recently bereaved. Surprisingly, some do. You could argue this offers a kind of comfort, but Power's attempts to bring some life to the show with dry humour sit uncomfortably, with audience members reduced to tears, and he certainly won't convince any sceptics. 'For entertainment purposes only' screams the show's disclaimer, but it barely even qualifies as that.

Assembly @ Assembly Hall, 5 - 30 Aug, 4,00pm (5.00pm), £5.00 - £13.00, fpp 263. [df] tw rating 1/5

THREEWEEKS IN EDINBURGH

tw rating 5/5NLP Theatre Company

National Gallery Complex, 2 Aug – 5 Sep, times vary, £5.00 - £7.00, fpp 166. [lvs]

tw rating: 4/5

and using their desire for a child, he gets her buffoon husband in on the act. The husband then recruits her priest and mother to coerce her to have sex with the young man. Is it rape if the husband says yes? Of course, vet it is all worked into the performance to make for a uniquely amusing show. When he manages to remember his lines Bewes proves adept at conveying the poetry of the voyage - the description of Moulsey Lock

Brandreth we are invited into the world of Lewis Carroll, whose books has played a part in children's lives for over a century. In this true story, Michael Maloney brings Carroll alive, capturing the magic of his imagination

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