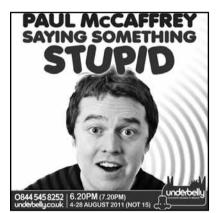
# YOUR DAILY SHEET OF EDINBURGH FESTIVAL REVIEWS: #21 THURSDAY 25/FRIDAY 26 AUG

# TEEWEEKSINEDINBURGH

### WELCOME TO THE **FINAL THREEWEEKS** DAILY OF FRINGE 2011

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#### COMEDY

#### Ben Target In Discover Ben Target Ben Target/PBH's Free Fringe

Ben Target offers something unlike any comedy l've ever seen. Emerging on stage in a rabbit hat with a bulging midriff, his first move is to introduce himself to each member of the audience personally for three rows. The next forty minutes is as off-the-wall as the first five minutes, as Target surprises you at every turn with his deadpan humour and bizarre props. This show eschews all the conventions of comedy that you would expect from one man on a stage, and as a result is a delight to watch. The finale leads you out of the venue entirely, so pack an umbrella in case of inclement weather. This is certainly an experience like no other. Bannermans, 17-27 Aug, 1.45pm (2.45pm), free,

fpp47. tw rating 5/5 [ec]

#### Bob Downe: 20 Golden Greats Phil McIntyre Entertainments

If you've never heard of Bob Downe, then the cheesy poster and title might put you off the show. It would be a great shame. For although the show is equally as cheesy and cringe-worthy, you'll find it difficult not to laugh, no matter how hard you try to fight it (believe me, I've tried; it can't be done). From his hilarious singing of karaoke classics to perving on innocent audience members, the wig-donning, make-up-plastered, colourfully camp Downe had the audience falling about with laughter. What holds their attention most is Downe's relentless energy and pizzazz emitted throughout his performance - a sign of dedication to his art, however silly he may look.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 – 29 Aug (not 16, 25), 8.00pm (9.00pm), £10.50 - £14.00, fpp50. tw rating 4/5 [ng]

#### Don't Trust Salmon: Fin

Don't Trust Salmon The sketches just keep coming in this buzzing, diverse show, which even features mini audio skits to fill the scene changes with instant comic gratification. The performers are well-drilled and confident, though there is some discrepancy in their skills; it is also true that some sketches are funnier than others and could have been extended, whilst others needed cutting down. Nonetheless, the variety of punning, absurdity and visual comedy is a real virtue, and each sketch feels fresh and inventive, covering topics from Alice In Sunderland to the socioeconomic strife of Tetris blocks. Performed in an intimate space to a delighted audience, this show is fast-paced, silly and polished - a brilliant (and good value) way to while away a

Zoo Roxy, 5 – 29 Aug (not 15), 4.00pm (4.50pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp68. tw rating 4/5 [tfw]

#### Hannah Gadsby – Mrs Chuckles

to contribute to conversations in social situations, and what she wants her final words to be, everyone in the audience was in hysterics. Hidden talents such as an uncanny Donald Duck impersonation and the 'throat fart' only made the audience fall that little bit more in love with her, while stories from her trips to Vietnam and acceptance of her own sexuality were delivered with exceptional comic timing. This show is so good, it should come with a hazard warning because you may actually laugh your arse off.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 - 29 Aug (not 15), 4.45pm (5.45pm), £8.00 - £12.00, fpp86. tw rating 5/5 [ng]

#### The Artisan

Cheeky Beggars / PBH's Free Fringe

Brothers can be best friends or worst enemies. In 'The Artisan', it is a comical combination of the two. This incredibly resourceful cast of three tell the tales of two brothers and their adventures around the world and under the sea through storytelling, physical comedy and puppetry. The female cast member is extremely versatile as she plays all the extra roles from Mother, to police officer, to love interest—using props simply, but to great effect. The puppetry works very well despite the performance not using ventriloquism, and it hardly impacts the driving force behind the play: the fantastic acting from the brothers. 'The Artisan' presents a believable love-hate relationship told with wonderful animation from beginning to end. Sin Club and Lounge, 6 – 27 Aug (not 16, 23), 6.45pm (7.45pm), free, fpp40. tw rating [4/5] [ep]

#### The Quotidian Revue Dryburgh Fletcher Ward

'The Quotidian Revue' want to celebrate the minutiae of life. "Question your teaspoons," they demand of their audience, at the beginning of an eccentric hour of comedy that sees three men take turns lecturing us on such illuminating topics as letterboxes, Boots meal deals and the average price of a Twirl bar. Statistics. PowerPoint presentations and pie charts abound as the three comedians - Lewis Dryburgh, Peter Fletcher and James Ward - manage to dredge humour up from the unlikeliest of sources. It helps that they're all so likeable, of course, but what really makes this show fly is the fact that it's so easy to relate to: we all enjoy pointless trivia, after all. It's odd, but 'The Quotidian Revue' is also rather brilliant. The Bongo Club, 14 – 28 Aug (not 19), times vary, £5.00 - £9.00, fpp138. tw rating 4/5 [eb]

#### **Trevor Browne – Greaterness**

Trevor Browne / PBH's Free Fringe

'Greaterness' is surely intended as an ironic title, and yet it works perfectly as an actual description of this fantastic show. Browne has created the character of an arrogant and - in his own head - globally renowned musician, in an act which is brilliantly funny and perfect down to the last po-faced expression. He delivers hilarious musical numbers, many terrible puns and some highly enlightening poetry. Several bonus points should also be awarded for managing



SNAP OF THE DAY: Ready for the last climb? Welcome to the final weekend of the Fringe. 'Snails And Ketchup' is on at the New Town Theatre until Sunday. Photo: Stuart Armitt

to insert 'Canesten' thrush cream into a genuinely funny song. Ultimately, it is hard to say which is more impressive - Browne's masterful command of the audience or the fact that such a fine show doesn't cost a penny. Don't leave Edinburgh without having seen it.

Rabbie Burns Cafe and Bar, 5 - 29 Aug (not 15), 7.45pm (8.45pm), free, fpp162. tw rating 5/5 [kw]

#### Vikki Stone & The Flashbacks: Big Neon Letters

Corrie McGuire For Objective Talent

Vikki Stone uses bouncy pop songs to tell the story of her quests for fame and love. Vivacious, naughty and self-deprecating, she has so much energy you wonder if she's going to spin off the stage due to sheer musical momentum. The strength of this show lies in her performance, as Stone's big brown eyes sparkle at the crowd with infectious enthusiasm. Slides referring to song lyrics are played behind her - an idea which can distract from the songs at

times, although when they done well, they are really successful. Stone makes effective and unapologetic use of her raunchy sense of humour - her dirtiest jokes draw both disgusted groans and big belly laughs from the crowd all at once.

Gilded Ballon Teviot, 3 - 28 Aug (not 15), 11.00pm (00.00am), £8.50 - £10.50, fpp163. tw rating 4/5 [ek]

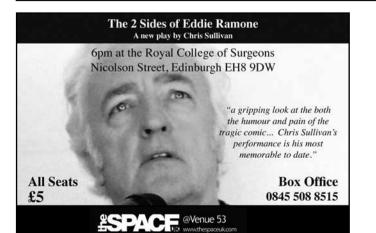
#### Steve Pretty's Perfect Mixtape Steve Pretty

If you're a fan of Norwegian folk jazz, you're going to wish Steve Pretty had made you a mix-tape in the Nineties. Reminiscing about various mix-tapes he has known gives Steve Pretty the excuse to show off his considerable musical talent using assorted props including a kettle, a snorkel and the lightly more traditional trumpet. The m dips a bit with the mention of the 2004 tsunami, but overall this is a cheerful little show. It's a shame the audience was so reserved because where else you can take cont>>

EdCom And Dick The Horse

Fringe afternoon.

I am in love. Who would have thought that someone so casual and relaxed could be so side-achingly hilarious? As Hannah talked about her love of biscuits, her inability



CHICKENSHED Theatre Changing Lives

# Slender Threads

Deeply moving, yet witty in all the right places, this is a production with a purpose. \*\*\*\* The Skinny

This is a piece with true integrity from a company with true compassion. \*\*\* The List

19-28 August 2011 at 5.15pm (not Wednesdays) ZOO ROXY 2 Roxburgh Place, EH8 9SU Box Office: 0131 662 6892

KATE DAISY GRANT with NICK PYNN AUG. 6-27, 6:40pm (NOT Mondays) FREE ENTRY Venue 221 FINGERS PIANO BAR 61a Frederick Street EH2 1LH MULTI-INSTRUMENTAL-TOY-FOLK-POP NEW CD OUT NOW GORGEOUS" om Robinson BBC "MESMERISING ... "

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cont>> part in audio charades, a middleclass gospel choir and a kazoo orchestra? This show is very funny and Steve Pretty's enthusiasm for music is completely infectious.

Underbelly Cowgate, 4 - 28 Aug (not 12), 1.25pm (2.25pm), £8.00 - £9.50, fpp155. tw rating 4/5 [km]

#### The Thinking Drinker's Guide To Alcohol

Dwink: Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham No bones about it, some shows are bulletproof: be it their reputation or their content, nothing a reviewer says will change a reader's mind. Offering free alcohol in return for listening to jokes and the history of booze, this is one such show; few people are going to care what a reviewer thinks. I'll simply say that that you'll drink Deuchars Beer, Zubrowka Bison Grass Vodka, Meastro Dobel Tequila, Kraken Spiced Rum, Tankeray No. 10 Gin, Perod Absinthe, Ketel One Vodka. Fantastic drinks, with fascinating discussion from funny people. You may be put off by the early afternoon show time, but if you're over 18 and don't need to operate heavy machinery in the early afternoon, then go alona.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 – 29 Aug, 1.00pm (2.00pm), £8.00 - £11.00, fpp157. tw rating 4/5 [jfb]

#### Sara Pascoe Vs The Apocalypse

Phil McIntyre Entertainments By Arrangement With Dawn Sedgwick Management

It's December 2012 and, as the Mayans predicted, the end of the world is nigh. Who is humanity's only hope for salvation? Sara Pascoe, of course! Well, she is halfcockroach.... After taking a beating from reviewers (as she makes only too clear) at last year's Fringe, Pascoe returns with punch to deliver a wonderfully wacky standup hour. Her show is riddled with ridiculously random observations as she endeavours to set a new world order after the apocalypse, such as no more faked orgasms and pornography for nerds (aided by a hilariously obscene cartoon). Pascoe's humour might be an acquired taste, but behind the naïve and self-deprecating persona is a highly intelligent stand-up. Surreal comedy at its best.

Pleasance Dome, Aug 3 – 29 (not 16), 7.00pm (8.00pm), £8.00 - £12.50, fpp147. tw rating 4/5 [st]

#### Terry Alderton

CKP In Association With Tim Payne

Tightly constructed madness, this solidly surreal set starts with one teasing toe in the mainstream before making its departure deep into left-field lunacy. Highlighting and subverting the tropes of generic comedy, Alderton creates crowds of persona all battling for the limelight - most frequently appearing is his Gollum-esque alter ego. Everything short of physically fighting himself, they bicker, argue, coerce, and debate. Using this inner discussion, he deals with hecklers and lays the foundation for future jokes. A master of sound effects and accents, he never lets himself fall into simple observation. Forever undercutting and usurping expectations, he is a delight to watch, even when he leaves the audience behind. This energetic surrealism is not to be missed.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 – 28 Aug (Not 15), 9.20pm (10.15pm), £9.00 - £12.00, fpp157. tw rating 5/5 [jfb]

#### The Boy With Tape On His Face

Lee Martin For Gag Reflex Management Ironically, the word-of-mouth sensation of last year's Fringe was a stand-up comedy show in which not a single sentence was uttered. Nominated for the 2010 Best Newcomer Award, 'The Boy With Tape On His Face' has returned to the great relief of everyone who missed the opportunity twelve months ago. This is sublimely ridiculous entertainment, depending as much on

uninhibited audience participation as the meticulously choreographed gestures of the remarkably expressive eponymous character, but divulging further details about this continually surprising hour would tarnish audiences' amusement – silence is golden, after all. Not even gaffer tape could mask the brilliance of this joyous performance. in which The Boy's ab-duct-ees are never humiliated maliciously but metaphorically raised aloft as champions.

Pleasance Courtyard, 15 - 28 Aug, 9.10pm (10.10pm), £9.50 - £12.50, fpp51. tw rating: 4/5 [jf]

#### Tom Deacon: Can I Be Honest? Avalon Productions

As a star of BBC's Radio One and with an ever-increasing public profile, the pressure is certainly on Tom Deacon to delight the masses at this year's Fringe Festival. Does he rise to challenge? Well, I certainly think so. The premise of his show this year is to get off his chest a variety of things that really irk and annoy him, each accompanied by a suitably amusing and often hilariously awkward anecdote - whether the grim reality of getting piles or the effort involved with eating certain fruit. At times the humour fluctuates but, on the whole, Tom delivers great original material with ever-soastute timing. A brilliantly savvy comic with a very bright future.

Pleasance Dome, Aug 3 - 29 (not 7, 14, 21, 28), 8.20pm (9.20pm), £7.00 - £9.50, fpp160. tw rating 4/5 [st]

#### **Best Of Irish Comedy** Stand Comedy Club

This showcase of Irish comedy, presented by Gavin Haynes is definitely worth a few of your earth pounds. The comedians alternate so it is inevitably a mixed bag; however, the night is a winner, as new emerging talents are given a platform alongside more seasoned comedians who keep the crowd satisfied while novices learn the ropes. Colin Murphy's warm wit has the audience in fits, while Andrew Stanley has them like putty in his hands. The jokes take advantage of the material: Ireland – meaning that despite their originality, they can feel cliché at times. However, when they get it right, this show hits the spot for a night of comedy. The Stand Comedy Club III & IV, 5 - 28 Aug, 6.05pm (7.20pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp47. tw rating 4/5 [hd]

#### Andy Zaltzman: Armchair Revolutionary

Andy Zaltzman / The Stand Comedy Club Andy Zaltzman muses on the world outside, how he can make a difference in it, and faces his own demise - all from the comfort of his armchair. You'd be forgiven for not expecting such finger-on-the-pulse satire from a man with clown hair and an arrow sticking through his head. Yet the show is punctuated by pre-recorded radio broadcasts and phone calls, which turn this hour of stand-up into a highly witty reactionary piece, which, as Zaltzman freely tells us, had to morph quickly to include the London riots, and does so with ease. This is comedy that takes the real and the satirical and sends it spiralling away into the surreal and a bundle of barrelling similes. The Stand Comedy Club III / IV, 3 – 28 Aug (not 15),

4.25pm (5.35pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp39. tw rating 4/5 [ja]

#### THEATRE

#### **Dances For Wolves**

**Class Stage Productions** 

and how unappetising and unbearable the audience is (IT managers). That is, until they hear that the Wolves FC manager is present and willing to pay £1 million to the lucky girl he'll choose to dance for his players. The competition starts, giving each actress a stage to show her fabulous entertaining, singing, and other skills. It's a great little melange of red corsets, raunchy moves, reinterpreted songs and uproarious entertainment.

C Aquila, 4 – 29 Aug (not 16), 9.30pm (10.20pm), £6.50 - £9.50, fpp253. tw rating 4/5 [vk]

#### Lol

Rosalind Adler

The Internet must be a boundless source for writers. Rosalind Adler has certainly struck gold with her keenly observational and witty 'Lol'. This one-woman show follows three equally misguided women - complacent Mags, wife and mother; delusional Sarah, lost in a Mills and Boon fantasy; and loose and languid Lucinda. Their lives gradually intertwine as the piece reaches its bittersweet conclusion. Rosalind is enchanting to watch in all guises: the three women are beautifully created through token costume pieces, a brilliantly expressive face and skilled variations in voice. Changeovers were slickly masked over by voiceovers from mainly doltish males' attempts to woo or impress women, although these became a little tedious Overall, 'Lol' is a perceptive and wonderfully performed piece.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 – 29 Aug, 12:55 (1:55), £6.50 - £8.00, fpp276. tw rating 4/5 [ru]

#### Stand Up And Be Counted Aslan Productions

What do you do when life seems to be giving you the cold shoulder? You face it, straight on, and with a sense of humour. This is precisely why after a lifetime of failed relationships, mothering predicaments, and a recent discovery of a cancerous tumour, our lead character has no choice but to take up stand-up comedy. Blending together subtle humour and surrealist cabaret, this performance gives an insight into the lives of many women past their fifties, who, with their children grown up, are wondering what to do next. Though it does deal with grave topics, the show never loses sight of its feel-good comedic appeal and this, its most emphatic trait, makes it indeed worth your time.

Paradise in Augustine's, 16 – 27 Aug (not 22), 4.30pm (5.20pm), £6.00, fpp300. tw rating 4/5 [ma]

#### The Dumb Waiter Honesthieves

The ominous presence of the dumbwaiter looms at the back of the stage whilst Gus and Ben, two hit men, await "the call" for their next job. Paradise In The Vault, with its bare stone walls and exposed lighting, is the perfect venue for this intimate piece. To achieve success in a production of this Pinter classic, the actors must deliver highly controlled performances, and Michael Bell and Michael Miles do not disappoint. This is a play about waiting - waiting to kill - and it is attention to the smallest moments and details that grants this production its sustained dramatic tension. Who knew that watching someone tie his laces again and again could be so interesting? Get your order in now.

Paradise In The Vault, 16 – 29 Aug (not 22), 2.40pm (3.40pm), £7.00 - £9.50, fpp258. tw rating 4/5 [ah]

#### Welcome To The Kerryman

Lauren O'Rourke / PBH Free Fringe A strong solo performance from Lauren

this location shift allows performer Lauren to display her talent as a character actor. Each pub regular, drama school student, and passer-by is portrayed distinctly and humorously, and the hour flies by in the company of the creative O'Rourke. Though strong in isolation, it would be good to see her as part of a larger piece that stretches her more, but for the purposes of this play she was excellent, and I look forward to seeing more of her work in future. Princes Mall, 6 – 27 Aug (not 16, 17), 3.30pm (4.30pm), free, fpp310. tw rating 4/5 [jfb]

#### **Devotion** Enebro Teatro

Structured around three silent scenes, the rest of the play seems only exposition for these superbly staged sequences. Matador's assistant Yelko opens the show by laying out the bullfighter's uniform in an unspoken ritual; the silence enforces the devotion this man has to his task. The symbolism of is palpable; the cape is laid over the pile of dress as though it's a funeral shroud. Next, two young bullfighters train. Stripped to the waist, the bodies stretch and circle an imagined bull whilst accompanied by a live performance of Albeniz's 'Asturias'. However, the final sequence, the matador being dressed in his clothes, was the highlight of the play. Slow and powerful, all the play's tensions were conveyed in these remarkable scenes.

theSpaces @ Surgeons Hall, 5 – 27 Aug (not 7, 14, 21), 7.20pm (8.15pm), £8.00 - £10.00, 255fpp. tw rating 4/5 [jfb]

#### King of Scotland

Glasgow Actors

Taking the form of rants at the end of each of his days, this comically tragic one-man play tells the story of a terminally unemployed man named Tommy, who is given a job by the government as a publicity stunt, only for his mind to unravel as he is shunned by his colleagues. It's wonderfully performed by Jonathan Watson, who extracts laughs amid the tragedy with pleasingly idiosyncratic dialogue flourishes and a real knack for weaving a yarn. The tone darkens in the second act - perhaps too much for something billed as 'comedy theatre' - but the intriguing story of a descent into madness with some jabs at the apathetic political structure we live in keeps it interesting.

Assembly Hall, 4 - 28 Aug (not 8, 22), 2.00pm (3.00pm), £9.00 - £12.00, fpp273 tw rating 4/5 [rss]

#### This Twisted Tale Paper Doll Militia

In a mystic marquee of blue air and fairy music, air-light acrobats swing and sway, astonishing the audience with their body control. In a space high above ground that reminds vaguely of a circus tent, a little girl meets the red-haired devil, climbing up lampposts, ropes and swings. Storytelling and movement weave a new world of faraway adventures into the blue air above a playground. The artists show immense skill; it is baffling how they speak with such calm voices while their bodies are under so much tension. Various parts of the story are wonderfully poetic, with some scenes delicate and beautiful, yet somehow these elements forfeit a little of their gentle intensity in this overwhelming production. Leith on the Fringe @ Out of the Blue Drill Hall, 6 -29 Aug, 4pm (4.55pm), £9.50 - £12.00, fpp303. tw rating 4/5 [vk]

#### White Rabbit Red Rabbit

A Volcano (Canada)/Wolfgang Hoffmann/ **Remarkable Arts Production** 

Written by Iranian Nassim Soleimanpour. White Rabbit Red Rabbit' is more an experiment than a play. It beckons the audience on a journey exploring ideas of responsibility and democracy in an oppressive society, as we (the audience) are forced to make choices throughout. This

dramatic monologue is read afresh by a new actor at each performance, adding a unique and raw quality to an already compelling show. It is fascinating to observe the actor become taken aback by the actions the writer has scripted. Yet despite the thoughtprovoking nature of the play, the writer's sense of humour also shines through in a series of bizarre episodes to delight the audience. A truly captivating and powerful piece of theatre.

St George's West, Aug 5 - 29, 12:15pm (1.30pm), £10.00 - £12.00, fpp311. tw rating 4/5 [st]

#### The Station: Fourstones The Idle Dream

Imagination and will power come together in this one man mini-epic that seeks to explore a boy's impassioned dream of finding an undiscovered rainforest in Northumberland. After learning about a grandfather he never knew he had, Al (Malcolm Hamilton) discovers a secret from the deceased relative who others have fobbed off as mad. Determined to prove his grandfather's sanity, he organises an expedition on a fantastical whim. Poetically beautiful and portrayed through a brilliant physical performance, this is a coming of age story that effortlessly rouses up one's own childhood memories. With an unceasing determination and conviction grounded in mythologies and urban folklore, this production acts as a wonderful piece of escapism that brings the absurd into the everyday.

Zoo, 5 - 29 Aug (not 15, 23), 3.00pm (3.55pm), £7.00 - £9.00, fpp300. tw rating 4/5 [aq]

#### Fleeto Tumult In The Clouds

Based around teen gang warfare in Glasgow, 'Fleeto' is one of the most compelling and hard-hitting pieces of theatre I have ever seen. It is performed to perfection by a superbly talented cast; Jordan McCurrach is particularly strong as Mackie, the troubled protagonist. A modern take on the Greek tragedy genre, the play explores the true horror of gang culture. from ruthless and cold-blooded violence to the heart-wrenching grief of a mother whose son has fallen victim to knife crime. Indeed, the relevance and contemporaneous nature of this play makes it all the more real. Its beautifully written script manages to be poetic and lyrical whilst maintaining a raw and gritty feel and is, on the whole, profoundly excellent.

Pleasance Courtyard, dates vary, 2.00pm (2.55pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp263. tw rating 5/5 [st]

#### Four For Jericho

Menagerie Theatre Co.

When Michael, an eager Christian desperate to film the Holy Land for his Sunday school group, is catapulted off the plane into the bustling Middle East, he has no idea what he has let himself in for. His good intentions fail him as he is forced to endure the enveloping Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Aided by just a few blocks of cement, the four-person cast fantastically envisage a bumpy taxi ride, busy marketplace and refugee camp, and the conflict is put into a realistic and touchingly human perspective through these entirely believable characters. 'Four For Jericho' is a whirlwind of laughter, religion and politics, and a brutal exposé of the destructive nature of people living side by side in hatred.

Pleasance Courtyard, 4 - 29 Aug (not 16), 2.45pm (3.45pm), £9.00 - £11.00, fpp263. tw rating 4/5 [fm]

It's always nice to find other airls who are really into football. Sometimes you meet them in unexpected places - in a strip show, for example. Five girls present a hilarious account of why they are in the business (money, fun), what they'd rather do (cook),

O'Rourke carries this tightly scripted gem of a Midlands exodus story. Working at her Birmingham local, the Kerryman, she vearns to leave. The opportunity comes in the form of a London-based drama course; ThreeWeeks Publishing, a division of UnLimited Media, Unicorn House, 221 Shoreditch High Street, London, E1 6PJ. Printing by Smart Design & Print Credits at www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/credits

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