

ThreeWeeksEDINBURGH

So little of what could happen does happen...



Salvi & the Box of Dreams

Hill Street Theatre
Master's Room
10.30am

BABY HINCE

seeing double: FIGURES VISION

Edinburgh's first simultaneous farce: two venues, two shows, two audiences linked by a live video stream.
Pleasance Courtyard, 11:30am

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★★★★★ Three Weeks

33
PLEASANCE COURTYARD

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FREE SHOW

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NOT MY CUP OF TEA

Not my cup of tea

3pm

theSpace on the Mile

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★★★★FringeGuru: ★★★★★Broadway Baby

COMEDY

Card Ninja: ReDeal
Javier Jarquin

I should have hated this. I had imagined myself surrounded by 10 year-old boys all going mental for a failed ninja with a few mediocre card tricks. How wrong I was! Javier Jarquin uses cards to burst balloons, make card boomerangs and ultimately to utterly destroy his foam adversary. Like a ninja he oozes coolness, has the talent to back it up and has an impressive stage presence. Not all tricks were successful first time - it would have been exceptional if they were - and this merely allowed him to improvise, often with hilarious results. I have never seen such an engaged, reactive and eager audience. Be prepared to play eagle, tiger, snake. Intrigued? Then go!

Assembly George Square, 2-26 Aug (not 13, 20), 11.20am.
tw rating 4/5 | [Alice Taylor]

Croft & Pearce Do It Like A Lady
Vivienne Smith Management

Leaping onto a tiny backroom/boxroom stage and bursting with energy, Croft & Pearce make a vigorous entry. The first sketch checks topical boxes - the Olympics, social networking - and it merely tickles their absurdity rather than satirising them. Darker streaks in the show such as the brilliantly performed and wickedly shallow Jean and June, and the Members' Club Door Whore ("make a club private... the arseholes will come") offset the fluffier moments like the Alan Bennett-style epistolary monologue and the gossiping tea drinkers. Choosing to give heavy accents to the more repulsive of creatures was perhaps the easy option; fewer obvious verbal signposts would invite a grope rather than a mere tickle in Croft and Pearce's world.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 1-27 Aug (not 15), 12.00pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [L Clarkson]

Fran Moulds: Significant Human Error
Avalon Productions

Fran Moulds could not have a more appropriate name, because it's her versatility as a performer that renders her debut Fringe show a veritable success. Performing six comic monologues - from a politically resentful guide of a Welsh mining museum, to a narcissistic, self-loathing celebrity columnist - Moulds certainly displays her undeniable talents as an accomplished character actress and storyteller. Not only does she perform each piece to great comedic effect, but Moulds also manages to produce a darker, more sinister edge which adds a sense of unnerving realism to each sketch, elevating them from simple, one-dimensional comedy characters. A master class in performance, I can't wait to see what else this gifted actress will produce.

Underbelly Bristo Square, 1-26 Aug, 2.50pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Simon Thornton]



SNAP OF THE DAY: The Hoff is in town and he's brought KITT and a kilt with him. Spend 'An Evening With David Hasselhoff' at Pleasance Courtyard. Photo: Ana-Claudia Magana

Mind Reading For Breakfast
Psychic Psychologist - Rob Bailey

The Sweet International gives every guest a free cake; already, at 11.30 this is my favourite show of the day. Free muffins aside, 'Mind Reading for Breakfast' is "psychic" psychologist Rob Bailey's offer of mystical entertainment. Bailey openly admits that he can't, as the title suggests, read minds - it's an act of psychology and illusion, and is a very accurate one at that. The downside of this show is that it is listed as comedy, and Rob's attempt at funny only musters a couple of tuts and sighs throughout the show. Suitable for adults and children, this performance is one for those who adore audience participation and will enjoy being pulled up on-stage for a trick.

Sweet Grassmarket, 11-27 Aug (not 18, 25), 11.30am. tw rating 3/5 | [Susan Ford]

FunBags Present Unusual Suspects FunBags

The Unusual Suspects - a group of four actresses - produce a mixed bag of comedy sketches in this show. The hits included a perceptive piece on Waitrose rioters and a nanny looking after two demented young children; on the other hand, some of the sketches are merely tabloid-inspired celebrity role-plays, including monologues from Cheryl Cole and Ant n Dec, while some attempts to get laughs through being rude seemed very am-dram. There is a good balance between the surreal and the realistic in the sketches, though, and the props are

hilarious, but the cast can sometimes be guilty of over-acting. Although brilliant in parts, this generally wasn't as creative as some of the other sketch shows at the Fringe, though the group clearly have some potential.

Just The Tonic at The Caves, 3-25 Aug (not 14), 12pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Nathaniel Meyers]

Andrew Bird's Global Village Fete CKP

'Andrew Bird's Global Village Fete' is one man, a microphone and a bunch of really good jokes. There's nothing spectacular here; no gimmicks, no boundaries getting pushed and no theme. What you get instead is an hour of well-crafted, well-delivered stand-up comedy. Bird has natural comic timing and a charismatic presence that demands your attention without being in-your-face. His material is classic observational fare - childhood, fatherhood, the crapness of trains - but it's witty, accessible and well-judged rather than stale or forced. Bird's set dips a little towards the end - there's perhaps only 50 minutes of top-notch jokes - but overall this is a finely-honed performance with plenty of laughs to leave you smiling.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 1-25 Aug, 6.50pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Bell]

Hanks and Conran - Pigs in Blankets

Hanks and Conran see themselves like pigs in blankets, but they can't decide who's the bacon and who's the sausage. They are typical bickering friends, with

standard fat and slag jokes firing back and forward between them. For a time, it's a tad predictable and they seem to get more out of it than the audience does. However, as things start to head a little off-book, it quickly changes. This pair has impeccable comedy timing and they bounce off each other incredibly well. Their interaction with the audience members coaxed into helping them stage a play is witty and there are some cracking one-liners. Not quite there yet but certainly a pair to keep an eye on.

Just The Tonic at The Caves, 2-26 August (not 14), 5.20pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Anna McDonald]

Hannah Gadsby - Hannah Wants a Wife

A hilarious stand-up routine focusing on the roles of women throughout the ages, 'Hannah Wants a Wife' takes us through different periods of history with the use of a slideshow of famous paintings. Hannah hypothesises on how difficult it would have been to be a woman (and particularly a lesbian) in the olden days, and also ponders the contentious issues that women are still fighting against, while keeping the mood light and the audience in fits of laughter. Her self-deprecating humour and tendency to wander off-topic merely add to the comic value of the show, talk roaming to subjects as diverse as the apocalypse, YouTube and M&M World. With something for everyone, this won't disappoint.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 1-26 Aug (not 13), 8.10pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Lauren Houghton]



Giddy Goat

1-27 Aug at 12.15pm

venue 34
ADAM HOUSE
CHAMBERS STREET
0845 260 1234
www.CtheFestival.com



Binge Thinking

2-27 Aug at 6.00pm

venue 145
INDIA BUILDINGS
VICTORIA STREET
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JONNY-&-THE BAPTISTS

★★★★★ 'Awesome' Fringe Biscuit
★★★★★ 'Genius' Exeunt
★★★★★ 'It rarely gets better than this' Ed Fest

★★★★★ 'Hilarious' Remote Goat
★★★★★ 'Foot-tapping' Broadway Baby
★★★★★ 'Wild, raw... fieriness & heart' The List

The hit debut act! Underbelly, 9.10pm

James Redmond and Ellie Taylor - Free Festival

James Redmond and Ellie Taylor

Though her co-stand-up James Redmond was otherwise engaged (“auditioning for ‘Total Wipeout’ or something”) and replaced temporarily by Australian Benny Boot, Ellie Taylor proved to be sparkling and energetic company, managing to come across as both poised and goofy in her half hour set. The former face of Matalan (2004) discussed her time as an overly smiley model; the horrors of girls’ night out Facebook albums, and having to move back in with her parents, ending with an excellent extended metaphor about a javelin. Even if not all her material was laugh-out-loud funny, Taylor is a naturally likeable performer with the potential to go on to really great things.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, 2-26 Aug (not 13), 12.00pm. tw rating 3/5 | [Holly Close]

David Longley: My Favourite Things

David Longley
A potent concoction of brutal truths and dark humour. Longley provides an intimate portrayal of his life, including his friends, family and his childhood growing up in Derby, through the lens of the philosophical concept of cognitive dissonance. He touches on a variety of controversial topics such as racism, death and homosexuality among other things, but his honest, open-minded and engaging nature helps to soothe an otherwise difficult pill to swallow. While the set is spread very thinly over a variety of topics, which can at times feel rather dolorous, Longley’s comedy is entertaining and the more serious side of his show gives a thought-provoking message of seizing the day, irrespective of whether it is good or bad.

The Stand Comedy Club, 2-26 Aug, 4.40pm
tw rating 3/5 | [Miranda Cannibal]

Cirque du Charlie Chuck

Charlie Chuck

Charlie Chuck’s entrance made it apparent that his circus is more of a playground - the audience watching on like concerned parents, terrified that their child might get too excited and hurt himself. Chuck smashed drums with a gigantic stick, kicked them over, clattered his hand between the symbols and went onto babble surrealistically, with some lovely (though random) cabaret thrown into the mix. This absurdist and outrageous humour is executed with a huge level of genuine self belief; this man seems impervious to theatrical conventions like structure. Don’t expect his magic to dazzle you though. The audience had fun, but you ought to steer clear if you’re hoping for something to make any degree of sense.

SpaceCabaret @ 54, 13-25 Aug, 12.30pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Joe Mountford-Smith]

Comic Strip!

There is no way that a lone male at a burlesque show can look anything but suspicious. Despite the delights of Missy Malone and LouLou D’vil’s dancing and Hannah Gadsby’s reliable stand-up, I couldn’t the shake the feeling that it didn’t all quite fit. Perhaps it was the swift changes of atmosphere forced on the audience, from whooping eroticism to polite chuckles in the blink of a compère. Maybe it was the fact that, instead of a great comedy show or fantastic burlesque night, the audience was treated to not-quite-enough of either to sate cravings, as each was cut off just as it reached its stride. Something wasn’t right, and that’s a bum deal.

Assembly George Square, 2-26 Aug (not 13 & 20), 10.40pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Joseph Trotter]

The Harri-Parris - The Leaving Do

Mai oh Mai Productions

Fed up of the monotony of rural Welsh life, Anni is leaving for the bright lights of London, but not without a leaving do... This low-key production is a wonderfully warm hour of song and witty dialogue, as the cast recount tales of living in west Wales: from the one and only nightclub, to the ominous presence of “weekenders”

with their four-by-fours and love of farm shops. The four actors perform with sincerity and conviction, as well as great comic flair. Indeed the punchy musical numbers never failed to induce laughter; my personal favourite being a Beyoncé inspired song complete with dance moves. Hilarious, though also with poignant moments, this is a delightful and playful story for everyone to enjoy.

Zoo - The Aviary, 3 - 26 Aug (not 15), 6.40pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Simon Thornton]

DANCE & PHYSICAL THEATRE

Work Songs

Dangerologists / Broderick Chow and Tom Wells

Imagine if WWF wrestling had a serious message. In Work Songs, Broderick Chow and Tom Wells wrestle with their consciences as they wrestle with each other. They question the audience about their hopes and dreams, and lament over how they got lost in pedestrian jobs. It’s misplaced self-importance versus joie de vivre. Though new in the material, but the violence almost reaches ‘Fight Club’ levels and I’m convinced that this pair have enough natural energy to power the entire fringe. The piece only falls apart a little with a painful extended monologue to really drive the message through, where some of the intensity is briefly lost. They are at their best when confronting the audience, and each other.

Zoo, 13-26 Aug, 1.15pm
tw rating 4/5 | [Joanna Gill]

MUSIC

Secret Opera Society

Secret Opera Singers

Cremini and porcini mushrooms. They melt almost like butter on the tongue as they enter into a symphony of fennel flavoured sausage, rocket and parmigiano. An excellent three course dinner is served in splendid surroundings and accompanied by lots of waiters and a sommelier, only not all of them work at Centotre! Some break into song: Italian, English, Scottish even. Excellent voices begin with a pretty entertaining first set (after starters). The set after mains is a bit generic, but probably what most people want to hear under the circumstances. Unfortunately the characteristic effect of combining Italian food and operatic serenading music gets slightly lost through the use of amplification, but this is still a very tasty and enjoyable occasion. Centotre, 13-15, 20-22 Aug, 9.30pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Veronika Kallus]

The Alleycats: Contemporary A Cappella

After a string of sold-out shows at last year’s Fringe, The Alleycats are back with new tunes, but the same exuberant enthusiasm for a capella. By mixing current chart-toppers and bygone classics, they are able to create exciting arrangements that cater to all ages and tastes. They perform Fleetwood Mac’s ‘Landslide’ with gentle, heartfelt passion and then seamlessly up the tempo with a frenetically intricate rendition of Britney Spears’ ‘Toxic’. One thing setting this group apart from other collegiate outfits is their beatboxing skill, which gives them a percussive edge that many groups are lacking. They also don’t rely heavily on gimmicky dance moves or forced humour, allowing their ample vocal talent to assume centre stage.

C, 12-27 Aug,5.30pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Lewis Wade]

Hot Chocolate At 10

Old Saint Paul’s Music

The opulent surroundings speak volumes about the show in store as soon as you walk through the door. But have no fear, any off-putting sense of aloof aestheticism is quickly dashed as a friendly face hands you a cup of delicious hot chocolate. The shows themselves change on a nightly basis; I happened upon an evening of Russian cello classics. The movements

were performed to an exceptional standard, and the church itself acted as an additional band member, its lofty ceilings providing the perfect acoustics as the notes inhabited the surrounding space, adding to the sensuous atmosphere. Without fear of hyperbole I will state that this show is the most relaxing end to a day to at the Fringe.

Old Saint Paul’s Church, 1-24 Aug (not 11-13 or 18-20), 10.00pm
tw rating 5/5 | [Lewis Wade]

The Vocal Orchestra

Underbelly Productions

Behold one of the most amazing feats: seven individual beatboxers come together as one glorious harmonic ensemble chock full of passion and energy. This is a stupendous and dynamic performance incorporating both chilling ballads and upbeat classics, dance numbers, and comedic theatrical skits all emphasising The Vocal Orchestra’s innumerable talents. One will be mesmerised by not only by the flawless vocals and choreography, but also simply by the passion and fun had on stage. Though The Vocal Orchestra had a bit of a slow start with the audience participation, they surely make up for it with their astounding talent and attitudes. One cannot compliment them enough; The Vocal Orchestra is a phenomenal show not to be missed.

Underbelly Bristo Square, 2-27 Aug, 5.15pm.
tw rating 5/5 | [Ellie Willis]

THEATRE

Hand Over Fist

Festival Highlights and the Comedians Theatre Company

Joanna Bending plays the part of a woman succumbing to Alzheimer’s, as she tries to piece together the fragments of her past so that she may look towards her future. This dramatic monologue is acted out with careful poise and elegance, given that many lines are crude and the script can be confusing. I often felt perplexed as to where this speech was going, and what exactly the woman was talking about, which was the point; the writing reflected the disorientation and confusion for the audience that the protagonist felt. Lines intended to be humorous mostly didn’t work, because of the dark nature of the material, and because the acting lent itself far more to that side of the performance. Pleasance Courtyard, 1-27 Aug (not 15), 1.55 pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Joe Mountford-Smith]

Just a Gigolo

Vanessa Rawlings-Jackson, Assembly and Lakeside Arts Centre

‘Just a Gigolo’ is a one man show; an autobiographical narration of the life of Angelino Ravagli, the lover of Frieda Lawrence, wife and then widow of writer D.H. Lawrence. Of course, with Maurice Roëves in the role it’s charming, touching and gently nostalgic; his performances tend to be difficult to fault. The play itself doesn’t have much to it - a narrated story partially illustrated by the erotic paintings of D.H. Lawrence himself. In lesser hands a man like Angelino could come across as pompous, unlikeable and patronising, but Roëves makes it work, and work well, turning his faults into touches of humanity that only make him easier to identify with. This isn’t fast paced or dramatic, but relaxing and melancholy.

Assembly George Square, 1-27 Aug (not 13), 3.20pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Katherine Cunningham]

Dylan Thomas: Return Journey

Richard Jordan Productions Ltd.

Anthony Hopkins, the original director of this play, allows you to close your eyes and be transported into the world of Dylan Thomas on his last lecture tour en route to the White Horse Tavern. The show consists of poetry and monologue by Bob Kingdom, who gives a beautiful portrayal of Thomas, making you feel as if you are in the presence of the poet himself. The emotion he conveys is raw, gripping and beautifully dark reflecting the dying optimism and hope of Thomas as he

struggles with alcoholism and depression, which can be as humorous as it is heart-breaking. It is this intimate setting and the smallest details from the use of lighting and Kingdom’s trainers which make this set perfectly polished. A feast for the ears.

Assembly Hall, Aug 2-27, 2.40pm
tw rating 5/5 | [Miranda Cannibal]

Irreconcilable Differences

Refractive Lens Theatre

There’s the core of a good play here: force the audience to decide who, between a husband and wife in a failed marriage, should get to live. Unfortunately, ‘Irreconcilable Differences’ is not that play. When a husband bashes his wife’s head off the floor, he’s lost the vote, no matter how many people she slept with. Abuse aside, ‘Irreconcilable Differences’ is just plain flat: we only rarely get venomous hatred from the actors and, despite sixty minutes in their company, I never got the sense that they had loved each other, yet to have felt the cost of failure, we needed to have seen what was lost. The final vote should have been gut wrenching; instead, it was just a dull, forgone conclusion.

Gryphon Venues at the Point Hotel, 1-25 Aug (not 5, 12, 19), 1.50pm.

tw rating 2/5 | [Andrew Bell]

Food for Thought

Figs in Wigs

Cheryl Coleslaw, Madonner Kebab and co. are introduced by the Artist Formerly Known As Mince to the sound of banging techno music. They are dressed in what looks like the best finds from a charity shop rummage, adorned with matching monobrows and blue lipstick and break into an intricately choreographed dance routine. You may spend the first twenty minutes of this show wondering what is going on, but once you get past this confusion and appreciate it for what it is, a quirky piece of devised theatre, it is immensely enjoyable. It is funny, clever and the movement is fascinating. It won’t be to everyone’s taste, but even if it isn’t, it’s so weird that you’ll find yourself wanting more.

theSpace @ Venue 45, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24 Aug, 7.05pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Anna McDonald]

Hunger

Artem Kretov’s adaptation of Knut Hamsen’s novel probably holds more resonance at the Fringe than anywhere else. The story of an impoverished artist slowly starving as he refuses to compromise his work for commercial gains must surely ring true with the innumerate performers bankrupting themselves this month! Kretov’s performance in this one man show is exceptional. Zipping about the theatre space, both onstage and through the audience, he delivers an intense, high energy portrayal of a man going through a breakdown, both physically and mentally. Both funny and disturbing in equal measure, it is an extremely accomplished piece of theatre. It can at times be difficult to follow, but in truth this adds to the overall chaotic effect.

Paradise in Augustine’s 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 Aug, 7.10pm.
tw rating 4/5 | [Iain Martin]

As You Like It

As Told By, in Association With Greenwich Theatre

It seems to be obligatory to set Shakespeare’s plays in every time and place except the ones he intended, and this can either be an opportunity to draw parallels and offer new interpretations, or an excuse to wear some stylish costumes. This production is the latter, and though there’s no depth of commentary, at least the Forest of Arden looks snazzy as a 1930’s speakeasy. With the play condensed into an hour, it’s fast paced and fun, though at times the already thin plot feels a little austere. It’s lifted by strong performances, especially from the excellent supporting cast, whose considered characterisation makes Touchstone, Jaques and a scene-stealing Celia the firm focus. The moody sax playing doesn’t hurt either. Pleasance Dome, 1-27 Aug (not 13), 1.30pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Dave Fargnoli]

Githa

The Flanagan Collective

In this one woman performance, Hannah Davies portrays the endearing and inspiring writer K G Sowerby, who battled for respect as a female author and playwright in early 20th century London. In 1912, Sowerby was hailed as an overnight success, as the first performance of ‘Rutherford and Son’ received critical acclaim. She would, however, have to deal with the unenviable stresses that accompanied it. Davies, who wrote the play, has a commanding script here. She switches between characters effortlessly, and her confidence and sobriety allow the audience to appreciate those who impacted on Sowerby’s life. ‘Githa’ will leave you feeling sympathetic and proud at Sowerby’s pioneering life, as Davies does justice to a truly remarkable story.

C nova, 3-27 Aug, 3.00pm
tw rating, 4/5 | [James Valentine]

The Music Box

Recursion Theatre Company

Exploring the transition from childhood to adulthood through the imagination of the central character Laura, the lines of temporal reality are blurred in this seductively sinister new play by Recursion Theatre Company. The simple staging is extremely effective, from the grey hues of the costumes to the rather ominous-looking mobile that hangs in the centre. The small cast perform this haunting tale with a beautiful quietness and I really was drawn into this unnervingly claustrophobic world of imagination. My only concern was that had I not previously known what the content of the play was, I would have struggled to deduce meaning from it. Yet its beauty was not in its words but in the performing: a simple yet spellbinding production.

Paradise in the Vault, 14-27 Aug (not 20), 6.10pm
tw rating 4/5 | [Simon Thornton]

Superheroes

Tom Corradini

What do most superheroes have in common? Superpowers, a notion of righteousness, justice and a lot of muscles? Well, you’re right, but that’s not all. Most of them also had a difficult or tragic childhood.... just think about it. The Hulk had a violent, alcoholic father. Thor - no love whatsoever from his godly parents. Spiderman? Orphaned. And so on. So is that why they grew into what they are, has this shaped the way they enter relationships? Tom Corradini presents a funny and intelligent overview of what really moves our heroes, while managing to get half the audience on stage to assist him. It helps to know all the characters but is not absolutely necessary.

theSpace on North Bridge, 10-25 Aug (not 11, 12, 19), 4.35pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Veronika Kallus]

The Taming Of The Shrew

Cygnnet Theatre

The Taming Of The Shrew is a tough sell - either you ignore (or finesse) the brutal breaking of Kate’s spirit, or you make it the central theme. Cygnnet Theatre choose the latter, cutting the play with ruthless efficiency until almost all that remains is a tale of control and abuse, although this might have worked better had the comic relief been cut entirely. Whilst this paring down largely works, the gender swapping is less effective - Tessa Gaukroger makes an excellent cold, domineering and wholly selfish Petruchio, but Matthew Neighbour’s Kate comes across as needlessly aggressive, rather than a feisty free spirit. Overall, this is a decent effort to tell a difficult tale that just doesn’t quite pull it off.

Sweet Grassmarket, 13-24 (not 18), 6.20pm.
tw rating 3/5 | [Andrew Bell]

ThreeWeeks

Editors & Publishers:
Chris Cooke and Caro Moses
Published by ThreeWeeks Publishing
a division of UnLimited Media,
221 Shoreditch High Street, London, E1 6PJ