

EDITION #21:  
FRI 23 AUG 2013

Welcome to the latest  
ThreeWeeks Daily  
Edition (and yes, this  
one’s real). This is the  
last reviews edition  
for 2013, but keep an  
eye out for more at  
ThreeWeeks.co.uk/  
reviews. And look out  
for an Editors’ Awards  
special of the Daily  
tomorrow.

CABARET

Flamboyant: Like a Flame,  
But Buoyant (Claire Healy/  
Free Festival)

Fittingly staged on the top of a double decker bus, this show sees spritely Clara Bell performing hilarious and beautifully written songs revolving around relationships, little things and generally being happy-go-lucky. She instantly engages the audience through her unique bubbly charisma and ingenious lyrics. The show is listed as ‘cabaret’, within which genre one can focus more on creating an eccentric, friendly atmosphere and be judged less on pure comic ability – yet she gets a laugh from almost every line. The title perfectly describes the show’s blend of quirky energy and emotion, and though some of the songs at the end aren’t quite as good as the openers, the momentum is maintained throughout by Bell, who is effortlessly charming and spectacularly entertaining.

Laughing Horse @ The Free Sisters, until 25 Aug (not 19), 10.00am.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Julian Joseph]

CHILDREN’S  
SHOWS

Aliens Love Underpants (Big  
Wooden Horse and Nick  
Brooke Limited)

Any show that starts by asking the audience what their favourite pants are immediately promises a fun and silly time. Adapted from the book of the same title, this clever stage show features only four cast members who effortlessly take on

the roles of multiple characters. It’s guaranteed the original songs will be stuck in your head for days as the show ends with a sing-a-long featuring ‘hairy pants’ and ‘shiny pants’. Highly entertaining for both children and adults, the audience is even treated to seeing the famous “Henry VII’s underpants” and “Kylie Minogue’s hot pants”. Major. If you have ever wondered where all your underpants disappear to, this mad and lively show has your answer.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 22 Aug, 11.30am.

tw rating 4/5 | [Lauren Stephen]

COMEDY

Heavy Petting (Laughing  
Horse Free Festival)

Heavy Petting is a thoroughly entertaining comedy sketch show performed by five friends from Middlesbrough. Loosely based on the theme of fear, the show incorporates some inventively absurd characters including the dangerous yet amiable psychopath with a fish finger allergy, to the ludicrously murderous, devil-conjuring girlfriend. Along with an array of creative and comically sinister scenes, this funny five-some throw in some witty acoustic sing-songs and several interesting props including a rubber hammer and a severed human head. With some exceptional acting, plenty of light hearted humour and some clever satirical quips - this lively and unique sketch show will certainly have you leaving feeling wickedly uplifted.

Laughing Horse @ Jekyll & Hyde, until 25 Aug 5.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Kayleigh Head]

Carl Hutchinson: All The  
Rage (Avalon Promotions)

Behind the polite seeming, well-groomed young man we see on stage is an alternative, irascible persona. Unwilling to let go of any slights against him, he revels in retaliating disproportionately over petty inconveniences: he does not share appetisers, he hates waiters who don’t write down orders, and he only disingenuously offers up the toilet for the other person to use first. We love how he admits to feeling a rage about things that, socially, we feel forced to accept, and feel a vicarious pleasure in hearing how he eschews politeness in order to say exactly what he wants. It is a very funny performance, easy to relate to,

which in fact has a sweet take home message: not to emulate his belligerence, but to make life happier by rising above it.

Underbelly, Bristo Square, until 25 Aug, 9.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Kyung Oh]

Thpethial (Ria Lina)

The premise of this show is fascinating but still expect to be presently surprised. Ria Lina takes a light-hearted look at the meaning of “special” for today’s society, in a way that is respectful and carefully put. Provocative and funny, she addresses the importance of political correctness gone mad without veering head-first into Daily Mail territory. She argues her point eloquently, supported by succinct extracts from social and written media, and she also performs some of her own musical material that is nail-bitingly close to the edge without being over-the-top. This show is guaranteed to have you thinking about it long after you have left. Not for the easily offended – or maybe it is...

Le Monde, until 25 Aug, 1.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Mairi McNicol]

Alan Committie: Fully  
Committed (Alan Committie  
and Assembly)

Committie’s energetic comedy is a treat to watch, and is complemented by his charming South African lilt. He is witty and smart, and his Fringe-based observational humour was original and funny. Although, he truly came into his own when he influenced his comedy with physical humour, characters and props. His idea of using ‘50 Shades Of Grey’-style narrative to improve school textbooks was inspired, and when he adopted the character of a motivational speaker, the jokes were stronger than ever. A true physical comedian, Committie is at his best when he can command the space, and move around in it, creating an energy and atmosphere where the audience are engaged, involved, and enjoying every moment of it.

Assembly Roxy until 26 Aug, 9.20pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Elizabeth Jewell]

Colin Hoult: Characthorse  
(James Grant Comedy and  
Supporting Wall)

Bounding around the stage in multiple and rapidly changing characters, any audience member could be forgiven for thinking Colin Hoult was slightly insane. Truly this is a comedian who will have the Marmite effect on fringe goers,

but thankfully, this reviewer found the entire routine hilarious. Taking us by the hand (quite literally) Hoult delves into his childhood imagination and the resulting material never fails to intrigue and entertain. Fans of the obscure, and Jim Carrey style comedy, will have aching sides at the end of this routine. Those who strictly prefer more conventional comedy might be slightly too confused to really enjoy Hoult’s performance, but one thing’s for sure, no one will ever be bored watching him. Unlike any other stand-up at the Fringe; Hoult’s uncompromising insanity makes for a memorable experience.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 26 Aug, 6.00pm

tw rating 4/5 | [Rory Morgan]

Fernando - Taste The  
Difference (Fernando)

An elaborate array of camping equipment and other odd things at the ready, Fernando is prepared to entertain by any means necessary, with a set made up of mostly short, food-related gags ranging from the the silly to the absurd. Fernando comes across like a combination of a children’s programme presenter and the Swedish chef Muppet, because of his childish humour and ridiculous voice which can make even the most serious person giggle; everything got the audience laughing, whether they wanted to or not. This act began with just one sell-out show at the Fringe in 2011 and it’s clear that it’s going to get a lot bigger after this year too. Fernando is one to keep an eye on.

Sweet Grassmarket, until 24 Aug (not 21), 7.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Alice Harrold]

Festival Of The Spoken  
Nerd (Phil McIntyre  
Entertainments by  
arrangement with Noel Gay)

Whilst it might seem like this show is designed to cater to a rather niche audience, in reality, most people, deep down, have at least some interest in science. And this trio of enthusiasts were very successful at showing some truly fascinating aspects of a subject that so many people approach with a groan; whether it was lauding the wonders of spreadsheets, enlightening us on the world of binary, or simply making a tornado of fire with a waste paper bin and some lighter fluid, all experiments and presentations were performed in slick, engaging, yet still humorous fashion. It was indisputably informative as well, so the show

felt like it served a real purpose, as opposed to just wowing the crowd for the sake of it.

Assembly George Square, until 25 Aug, 6.10pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

Going Dark! (Beth Vyse /  
PBH’s Free Fringe)

‘Going Dark!’ is definitely one of the weirder things you’ll see this year. A one-woman show detailing the rise and fall of Betsy Lynn (sister to Vera Lynn and... Vio Lynn) through fame, a sex change and her tv appearance with ITV9s [sic] Jane McDonald. Beth Vyse plays all her own characters, apart from when she engages in a little enforced audience participation, and if the idea of quite a lot of discussion of feminine hygiene makes you nervous then you’re in for an uncomfortable hour; it’s generally not for the faint hearted because it’s incredibly crude and unfathomably odd. The explanation of the sex change process is hilarious, and pisses all over science, although ultimately ‘Going Dark!’ is smarter than it seems. Left me a little bit stunned, but then, it is a stunningly lewd show.

The Banshee Labyrinth until 24 Aug, 4.45pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Elizabeth Jewell]

Nakedy Nudes  
(Token Events)

If you’ve been perplexed at why the subjects of sculptures and paintings from Ancient Greece to Napoleonic France seem pathologically incapable of keeping their clothes on, or having clothes in the first place, look no further that this torrent of fascinating erudition parsed through the blunt, hilarious perspective of Hannah Gadsby, skilled art-historian and brilliant comic mind with a lightening-fast delivery. It’s delightful to watch her vocalise the characters in these paintings, imbuing them all with variations on her own unabashed, barefaced cheek (sorry), transforming these figures from passive objects to be gawked at into comic characters representing the bizarre ideas held my the men of their times, making plain and verbalising their postures, symbolism and silliness.

Assembly Checkpoint until 25 Aug (not 19-22), 1.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Joe Abel]

Ahir Shah: Anatomy  
(Ahir Shah/Free Festival)

Ahir Shah is a confident and loquacious young comedian specialising in the deconstruction



SNAP OF THE DAY: Gecko’s ‘Missing’  
at Pleasance Courtyard. Photo: Mark Dawson

and analysis of his own show. His material includes the Hindu/Muslim divide, obscure 19th century philosophy, and a fair bit about ejaculation; the latter being incredibly awkward (though this may be because I ended up sitting next to his parents). This stand-up knows a lot of big words, and isn’t afraid to use them, but is also good at switching between high and lowbrow humour. However, some jokes are inaccessible, and the continual analysis of the comedy can interrupt the flow. But overall, a enjoyable and highly cerebral show. Though not the kind that you would attend with your parents (or, indeed, anyone else’s).

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 25 Aug, 4.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Isobel Steer]

Danny Ward - Pressure Point  
(EdCom / Free Festival)

This outstanding stand-up show started with a literal bang, as Danny Ward bounded onstage with a triplet of party poppers; and the high energy level continued throughout. The highly-strung Ward talked about his personal struggles with stress and anxiety, and explored the possible causes. From huge rants about Rimmel and the real ‘London look’ (think ‘sweaty commuter’), to demonstrations of his Buddhist coping techniques, Ward had the audience in stitches. The delivery of his routine did seem a little over-rehearsed, and his spur-of-the-moment comebacks were slow and a little disappointing. Nevertheless, evident practice also

meant the show was slick, quick, and packed with funny material. A perfect recipe for fighting stress.

Laughing Horse @ The White Horse, until 25 Aug, 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Victoria Beardwood]

Loyiso Gola -  
The Professional Black!  
(Loyiso Gola)

Loyiso Gola is one of those people who seems effortlessly funny; it’s as if hilarity is his default state. A reserved and straight-faced delivery only accentuates the mix of satire, whimsy and sass as Gola covers topics from aeroplane exits to South African apartheid. His audience interaction never failed to have the room in stitches and his satirical material is enlightening and almost wholly new to British ears. Rather than jokes about politicians’ personal lives, Gola covers more general topics, such as poverty, with precision, wit and insight. A great comedian and a much-needed satirical addition to the British comedy scene.

Assembly, George Square, until 26 Aug, 10.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Lizzie Milton]

1/5 Bad  
2/5 Mediocre  
3/5 Good  
4/5 Very Good  
5/5 Excellent



**Aisling Bea: C'est La Bea  
(Feature Spot Productions)**

Winner of last year's 'So You Think You're Funny' award, Aisling Bea is destined to be the next big thing. With a highly original, yet still polished set, she had the audience on her side from the very first minute. Performing very sharp observational and surreal comedy, whether it was deconstructing the goings on in a nightclub or waxing lyrical about hip-hop, all aspects of her act were very strong indeed. With a shed-load of confidence that managed to be endearing as opposed to arrogant, Bea worked the stage at a hundred miles an hour, leaving little room for air in between. With charisma and material as good as this, she's close to creating a belle époque of comedy.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, until 26 Aug, 6.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

**Nick Bowling Laughs In The Face Of Death For 45 Minutes And Then Asks Him Politely To Leave (Nick Bowling/Free Festival)**

A playful presentation-style set on the truth about facing death; how to evade it, how to plan a funeral and which font to choose for your headstone. Delivered with dry wit, underscored by some genuine honesty, Bowling covers all the bases for the road to the afterlife with his own observations and esteemed PowerPoint presentation. The concept of the show is clever, not because dealing with death through stand-up at the Fringe is original, but because of the way it's done. Bowling keeps the laughs coming and manages to stay light-hearted throughout despite the deathly details. If you enjoy well crafted comedy given by a confident comic then this is the show for you.

Laughing Horse@Free Sisters, until 25 Aug (not 21), 1.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Alice Harrold]

**The Thinking Drinker's Guide To Alcohol (Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham / The Assembly Rooms)**

A delicious cocktail; one part terrible puns, one part knob gags, two parts campaign for better drinks, a shot of genuinely interesting alcohol facts all mixed with six (count 'em, six) free drinks; consequently my memory of 'The Thinking Drinker's Guide To Alcohol' is a touch hazy. Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham are genial hosts, even if they do seem a little uncomfortable when forced to improvise. The jokes skirt the borders of taste, but remain just the right side of the line, while the drinks keep flowing and the audience keep laughing. From dildo racing to art criticism via hard liquor, this is a fun, fascinating show for booze hounds everywhere. Just remember to eat first.

The Assembly Rooms, until 25 Aug, 6.30pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Bell]

**Big Value Comedy Show - Late (Just The Tonic)**

Showcasing different acts every night, the Big Value Comedy Show is a bit of a pick and mix of comedians but you will definitely not leave disappointed. With three stand-ups and another host comedian you are guaranteed to find something that you like, but, as I found out on the night I saw, you may also find something you don't particularly like. The highlight of our line-up was Kate Lucas, a singer/songwriter whose ballads were hilarious, witty and executed wonderfully with catchy tunes; topics ranged from couples' arguments to hating your own child. Paul Myrehaug, our closing act, finished with some very rude but laugh-out-loud stand-up. The show promises fantastic up-and-coming new comedy, and it delivered.

Just The Tonic at The Caves, until 25 Aug, 9.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Sarah Virgo]

**Mr Ambiguousness (Ben Norris/PBH's Free Fringe)**

'Mr Ambiguousness' is Ben Norris's first show at the Edinburgh Fringe since 1998. He says he's happy to be here, and as he's a father of triplets that comes as no surprise. Norris works the audience remarkably well, stating from the start that he's going to treat the show as a late night one, rather than the quiet, early evening gig he's stuck with. In a show where the audience is undeniably hard to please, Norris turns everything to his advantage and improvises with quick wit when things go wrong. His show is far from the 'car crash' he predicted would be written about in the review, though the rap ending does fall somewhat flat and leaves the audience slightly baffled.

The Dram House, until 24 Aug (not 14), 7.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

**The Only Way Is Downton (Luke Kempner - Festival Highlights)**

I always thought that 'Downton Abbey' was just a glorified soap, and it was refreshing to see that Luke Kempner thought the same. This was a fantastic dissection of television today, with Kempner starring as and exploring all characters that represent contemporary culture, from 'TOWIE' to the 'Great British Bake Off', with an uncanny impersonation of Andy Murray along the way. Not only was his acting very impressive, effortlessly changing between a vast number of characters, but the whole act was also very enjoyable indeed, with some excellent observations and cleverly scripted lines. It was certainly a damning indictment of the television that we choose to watch these days, but Kempner gives us a glimmer on the horizon. I'm sure we'll be seeing him again soon.

Pleasance Courtyard, until Aug 26, 4.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Robert McGowan Stuart]

**Tom Rosenthal: Благодаря (Phil McIntyre Entertainments)**

Named Best Newcomer at the British Comedy Awards, Tom Rosenthal's performance combines superb acting skills, brilliant humour and intelligence with great comedic success. His routine is a hilarious tour de force through subjects such as sport, the detrimental effect of Football Manager on relationships, Danny Dyer's cockneyisms and a bizarre but uncanny gargoyle impression! Rosenthal's strength lies in his skilful balance of wit and wisdom; the many side splitting anecdotes of his time in Bulgaria, (such as being poked by a prostitute and being pelted with seeds), are combined with insightful cultural reflections and an exploration of the universal problem of reconciling cultural differences. Excellent comic timing and Rosenthal's unpretentious delivery and humility unfailingly endears and wins over the audience.

Pleasance Courtyard Beneath, until 25 Aug, 8.15pm.

tw rating 4/5 (Priyanka Raval)

**MUSIC**

**Alternotive A Capella (Oxford Alternotives)**

The Oxford Alternotives took to the stage, and at first something wasn't quite working. There were some very confident members with great stage presence, and a few less confident who added an awkward air to the performance. However, as the song choices became more impressive and challenging, the Alternotives won the audience over. A more emotion-filled a capella group than most, the Alternotives had several slower and more touching songs in their repertoire. Particularly impressive and moving were Coldplay's 'The Scientist' and Noel Harrison's 'The Windmills of

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Your Mind'. It was not all gloomy however, with a hilarious interlude of a musical version of Blind Date and two hysterically awkward and charming presenters throughout. A varied performance that started shakily and ended brilliantly.

theSpace @ Symposium Hall, until 24 Aug, 2.05pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Helena Wadia]

**Out Of The Blue**

Oxford's all-male a capella group Out of the Blue return to the Edinburgh Fringe for yet another year. For an hour they delight the audience with well-known songs, interspersed with charming chat and an obvious joy for the stage. Although lead vocals do occasionally falter, the harmonies and lively nature of the rest of the performance cannot be faulted. A particular highlight was their rendition of Swedish House Mafia's 'Don't you worry child', because it was so unexpected and a complete contrast to the original. It's a student group, so the line-up of OOTB changes year on year, but this incarnation of the group certainly know how to have a good time without compromising on musical quality.

Assembly George Square, until 26 Aug (not 14), 2.00pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

**Airnadette (Underbelly Productions)**

The self-proclaimed "biggest air band in the galaxy" storm Edinburgh for a non-stop hour of pop culture fun. When not rocking out to well-known choruses the band creates a plot, with the dialogue made up entirely of famous film and television quotes. The actors never utter a word from their own mouths, instead dubbing perfectly along with the tape. The acting is hilarious, and though the plot does get confusing and unnecessary at times, it never detracts from the act; half the fun for the audience is wracking their brains to remember who said what.

It's a very clever act, like no other in Edinburgh at the moment. A must-see, particularly for film fans.

Underbelly Bristo Square, until 26 Aug (not 7, 13, 19), 8.50pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

**MUSICALS**

**Beulah (The Flanagan Collective In Association With C)**

Two whimsical men and a variety of instruments whisk us away to William Blake's magical world between reality and dreams: Beulah. Jim Harbourne and Ed Wren are the narrators, puppeteers and soundscape of this story. They invite us in through folk song and then with simple yet effective puppetry they bring the story to life. This is a love story over time and Jim and Ed discuss the measurement of time, whether it's in seconds or dreams or heartbeats. The songs, like lullabies are almost hypnotic and along with the puppetry and multimedia, transport the audience to this poetic dreamland. Beulah, beautiful in all its simplicity, was a place I didn't want to leave.

C, Until 26 Aug, 1.40pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Samantha Strachan]

**THEATRE**

**From Where I'm Standing (:DELIRIUM:)**

This outstanding play combines traditional storytelling with flawless physical theatre and cinematic, fragmented flashbacks. 'From Where I'm Standing' engages with problems which feel truly relevant to our time, such as concerns about the threat of terror, communication and a reliance on technology. The sound effects, music and projections were really smart, but unfortunately occasionally malfunctioned. The time-shifts in the play are rapid,

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splintered and extremely effective - creative sets, aesthetically pleasing changeovers which were impeccably timed and rehearsed to a tee. Stealing the show was director Oliver Kaderbhai, playing Adesh, who captured youthfulness and earnest regrets with ease and emotion. He and the rest of the cast tell a moving story about the importance of storytelling, utilising creative technical aspects with a beautiful tale.

Underbelly Cowgate until 25 Aug, 1.30pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Elizabeth Jewell]

**Novemberunderground (Burning Oak Theatre)**

A look into how the future might look, which focuses on the possibility of terrorist activity in Canada. 'Novemberunderground' is a dark, vastly imaginative piece of drama following the lives of a series of characters who, whilst the play progresses, we learn are all connected. At the heart of this are Tim and Clara, a couple who are on their first date after meeting online and we are unaware of the events that tie them together until the end of the play. From the sexual tension between the couple to the nonchalant attitude of the cleaner, actor Gerard McGrath, the acting is incredible but the mysterious and gloomy script leaves us still wondering what the act of Novemberunderground actually was.

Underbelly, Cowgate, until 25 Aug, 10.45pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Sarah Virgo]

**The Liz and Dick Show (Cheshire Actors Studio)**

A volcanic one act play. The heated exchanges between the explosive couple that was Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton are brilliantly resurrected by Lydia Poole and Ken McConnell. The spotlight was on their acting ability, for the staging was simple, the lighting limited, the music minimal. Poole

and McConnell triumphed. With a masterful command of the stage, they delivered the script's many witticisms to full effect, and laughter rippled throughout the hour. The characters teemed with volatility: one moment would see Poole slinking around with a flirty twinkle, the next she would flare to anger at the barbs shot by McConnell. Their onstage love-hate dynamic fuelled the hour so powerfully that it flew by; a sensational duo.

theSpace on North Bridge, until Aug 24, 2.55pm.

tw rating 4/5 | [Sophie Baggott]

**Bite The Bullet (Sandy Nelson / The Assembly Rooms)**

In a nostalgic play which demonstrates the fatality of courting fame, our crooning protagonists displayed a delightful chemistry - an exasperated Carl (Sandy Nelson) and the rubber-faced Les (Keith Warwick) in turn keeping each other's whimsies down to earth with charming rapport. Warwick in particular drew empathy and belly laughs in equal measures; however there were moments when the pair's characterisation felt more like a parody of teenage-hood than a representation - and while the audience enjoyed the comedy of the caricatures, it was sometimes difficult to believe the performance. Kirstin Maclean delivered an engaging narrative, effortlessly shifting between supporting characters. A marvelously scripted hour of chuckles, tears and moving moments, strung together by gorgeous acoustic duets, this is one to look out for.

The Assembly Rooms, Until 25 Aug, 2.45pm. tw rating 4/5 | [Kate Pasola]

**INFO**

Published by ThreeWeeks Publishing, a division of UnLimited Media [www.unlimitedmedia.co.uk](http://www.unlimitedmedia.co.uk)

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