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Jason John Whitehead
letters from mindy

"Jason John Whitehead should be in charge of this country. His ideas on compulsory drug taking and reclaiming the world from 'the hated children' are patly such a direct route to a better life for everyone!" - *Frankie the Critic*

★★★★★ The Critic
★★★★★ Frankie the Critic
★★★★★ Metro

0844 545 8252 | 22.25PM (23.25PM)
underbelly.co.uk | 3-28 August 2011 (not 16) | **dairy room**

PAUL McCAFFREY
SAYING SOMETHING STUPID

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FEAR AND MISERY OF THE THIRD REICH

Cvenues | **The Lincoln Company**

Stephen King
Secret Window
Secret Garden.

Cvenues | **The Lincoln Company**

CABARET

Fascinating Aida: Cheap Flights

Fascinating Aida

Cast off your preconceptions of cabaret as stuffy and outdated and prepare to usher in the relevant, modern - and rather cheeky - Fascinating Aida. With a show based on the name of their viral YouTube hit (check it out now - you will struggle to contain your giggles), this performance boasts their songbook favourite and some new additions. With topics ranging from Osama Bin Laden to orang-utan surrogate mothers, from the recession to religion, it is fitting that the cast declare this show is not "for those of a sensitive disposition". Think the observant, witty nature of Tom Lehrer and the raucous, blunt honesty of 'Loose Women' and that's what is offered by these established Fringe favourites.

Gilded Balloon Teviot, 3 - 29 Aug (not 4, 7, 17), 6.45pm (7.45pm), £11.50 - £14.00, fpp10, tw rating 4/5 [ck]

The Spaces Between

The Jane Austen Argument

Emo-cabaret - there's a word combo you're not used to hearing. Complete with eyeliner, knee high socks and wings, 'The Jane Austen Argument' look like fallen angels and perform with an angst any "emo" would be proud of. At times I found myself cringing at the hyper-emotional repertoire of songs, and the interludes of dialogue were unconvincing. The music, however, was delivered with the conviction of seasoned performers; Tom Dickin's voice has a husky gravelly quality which is set off perfectly by Jen Kingwell's pitch perfect notes on the piano and Regina Spektor-style vocals. Raw and wonderful, the music had the audience rapt. To quote from the show: "it's naff but it's cabaret so deal with it".

St George's West, 5 - 29 Aug (not 17), 9.15pm (10.20pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp14, tw rating 3/5 [sm]

CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Alice's Wonderland

Gresham's

There are moments of brilliance in this play, performed by children and kept true to the spirit of Lewis Carroll. The Mad Hatter's Tea Party, in particular, is hilarious and suitably daft, with the children displaying wonderful comic timing. The look of the play is also successful - the black costumes and set with splashes of bright colour highlight the elements of light and dark in these peculiar children's stories. There are some fantastic performances from the principal characters, with the March Hare and King of Hearts being particular favourites. The moments of physical theatre are interesting, though in some cases not completely successful due to a lack of commitment and originality. Overall, though, a very good reinvention of the Alice story.

C, 7 - 12 Aug, 12.05pm (1.05pm), £5.50 - £8.50, fpp18, tw rating 3/5 [rs]

Lucia And Scot And The Big Flamenco Adventure!

Alba Flamenca

Ole! Babies, toddlers and mummies gather together to tap, clap and shake to a delightful mixture of Flamenco, puppets, storytelling and song. Puppeteer Pam is accompanied by two fabulous Flamenco dancers, her guitarist and singer, on an earnest journey all the way from Edinburgh to Espana to "find Scot's rhythm". Scot is a six year-old boy whose best friend is Lucia, his Spanish neighbour. There is, of course, an implicit playful nod to Scot as Scotland, and the show is an interesting way to introduce children to Spanish dance, as well as very loosely framing the difference in cultures. Pam's wonderful group clearly adore what they do and the persistent smiles on stage are infectious.

Alba Flamenca, 5 - 15 Aug, 2.00pm (2.45pm), £5.00 - £7.00, fpp24, tw rating 4/5 [lc]

Mable Mackintosh And Her Enormous Pants!

Random Acts Theatre Company

Aside from dozens of pairs of gaudy pants and a pink bear costume, not much appeared to stand out from this performance. The acting was poor for the most part, and the plot was trite, as it involved the bullied protagonist achieving well-deserved fame and recognition in the cheesy denouement that followed. It might be fair to mention, however, that I am no longer five, and therefore cannot speak for the younger members of the audience. The musical numbers, dance-offs, and crowd interactions seemed to go down very well with the kids, who wilfully participated at many points. A valuable message against bullying might account for another reason why parents should take their small - I repeat, small! - children to see this production.

The Bongo Club, 8 - 21 Aug, 11.30am (12.20pm), £5.00 - £6.00, fpp25, tw rating 2/5 [ma]

COMEDY

Hitch And Mitch - Genesis

We Happy Few / PBH's Free Fringe

Packed with ridiculous sketches, crowd interaction and a very unique sense of humour, an hour with Hitch and Mitch provides a refreshing way to start the evening. In fact, this might be the only production in the world that is funny before it has even started. The waiting audience is provided with amusing antics alongside a slide-show count-down to the show's beginning, setting them in a bubbly mood for what will follow. Some of the skits did prove somewhat repetitive at times, and there was a general requirement for British TV literacy to fully comprehend the acts. The overall effect, however, was a positive one, which was met with much laughter and enjoyment from the crowd.

The Banshee Labyrinth, 6 - 27 Aug, 6.00pm (7.00pm), free, fpp88, tw rating 3/5 [ma]



SNAP OF THE DAY: What's playing in Donna's world? Chicken Pox Fox and Live Theatre's Donna Disco is at the Hill Street Theatre. Photo: Mark Conway

The Gentlemen Of Leisure Present: The Death Of The Novel

Bravo to these erudite and sophisticated young gentlemen for daring to break the mould of conventional sketch-show structure! The cultural connoisseurs' wry and askance lecture on the development and demise of popular literature, from acclaimed 'Don Quixote' to the deplorable "internet typewriter", improved gradually - audience members were perhaps too highbrow and repressed to do anything more enthusiastic than titter mildly and applaud politely at first. However, the duo hit their stride with some marvellous one-liners ("If I want fiction, I'll read a newspaper!"), concluding with a salute to reading that justified the price of admission alone. This was a solid, satisfying but not sensational hour, which was remarkably appropriate for a commentary on the death of the novel.

Just The Tonic at The Caves, 4 - 28 Aug (not 17), 3.20pm (4.20pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp82, tw rating: 3/5 [jf]

How Did I Get Here?

Laura Levites

On the day I went to see her show, Laura Levites wasn't wholly sure how she got there; she only found out she was coming to the Fringe two weeks ago (she replaces a last-minute cancellation) and had just got off a plane from the US. But, like any good comedian, she turned the worst of this situation to her advantage; some of the funniest parts of her one woman stand-up-sketch-show were those in which she riffed on the chaos. Levites enthusiastically acts out a series of increasingly farcical, and at times touching, scenarios featuring her disastrous relationships and her much-adored dog. Her infectious enthusiasm will make you glad she found her way to Edinburgh.

Laughing Horse @ The Phoenix, 4 - 28 Aug, 2.50pm (3.50pm), free, fpp n/a tw rating 4/5 [lm]

The 2 Sides of Eddie Ramone
A new play by Chris Sullivan

6pm at the Royal College of Surgeons
Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DW

"a gripping look at the both the humour and pain of the tragic comic... Chris Sullivan's performance is his most memorable to date."

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Gwangju 1980 meets Tunis 2011
"A must-see show" *Sunday Herald*

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Isy Suttie: Pearl and Dave

Live Nation

Songs and stories, Skype and secret messages, Suttie’s show tells the tale of Pearl and Dave. It’s a bit like talking to one of your sister’s friends when she’s a little tipsy. A talented guitarist, Suttie tells us a story of long-distance love over time and space, whose characters we really come to recognise and feel for. As the act draws on, the story takes over, so we become more interested in it than in Suttie’s gags; the eager girl who bounded on an hour beforehand becomes a woman heavily involved in her friends’ lives and perhaps too serious for it. In all, a charming, amiable act and a tight script, but not one that will split your sides with laughter.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 – 29 Aug (not 15), 5.00pm (6.00pm), £9.00 - £11.50, fpp93
tw rating 3/5 [ja]

Seminar

Emily Watson Howes

Emily Watson Howes has a rather unnerving smile, which, in her guise of Kimberly Feldhauser, grows somewhat strained as the 'Seminar' goes on. Kimberly is determined that we must all smash stress, and as she suggests more and more bizarre ways of defeating it, she grows frustrated with her audience and the certainty that they will waste their lives. The character that Watson Howes has created is a triumph, from the smile to the calming voice, and though the show is undoubtedly a hilarious satire on the stress-relief industry, it is her relationship with her audience that makes it brilliant. "Laughter is an excellent way to conquer stress," Feldhauser tells us, so go and de-stress at this fantastic show.

Pleasance Courtyard, 7 – 28 Aug, 2.10pm (3.10pm), £7.00 - £8.50, fpp150.
tw rating 4/5 [rs]

Joe Wilkinson: My Mum’s Called Stella And My Dad’s Called Brian

Technology isn’t like it used to be. My mum said the funniest thing. Men are different from women. My dad said the funniest thing. Aren’t strip clubs awkward places to drink. My friend said the craziest thing. This and other such witticisms are what you can expect from an evening in the company of Joe Wilkinson. Coming across as a whinging thirty-something rather than an alternative comic, it was disappointing that for a ticketed show by a supposed experienced professional, the material was the same as that being used by first-time stand-ups on the Free Fringe. This is not to say that Wilkinson can’t raise a laugh; it’s to say that he is only very mildly amusing.

Pleasance Courtyard, 5 – 28 Aug (not 10,17, 24), 5.45pm (6.45pm), fpp100.
tw rating 2/5 [jfb]

I Didn’t Mean To Be A Virgin In The 80s

Laura Hayden

Laura Hayden spent her teenage years in California surrounded by bright colours and synth-pop, much like the setting for this year’s show. In the 80s, Laura had her heart broken, and here she tells the story in all its painful glory. Those were the days when relationships were more innocent, cars were passed down through an entire family, and your ex-boyfriends couldn’t stalk you on Facebook. The journey through Laura’s formative years is sweet, funny and light-hearted; she’s cute, and the videos and pictures that accompany her routine are fun, but it’s not going to set your world alight. The show is perfect, however, if you want to feel nostalgic for the hazy, neon-coloured 1980s.

Sweet Grassmarket, 4 - 29 Aug, 4.05pm (4.55pm), £6.00 - £8.00, fpp90.
tw rating 3/5 [lam]

The Lunchtime Club 2011

Best Medicine Management

It may have a fairly innocuous name, but don’t go along expecting sweet-natured comedy in this afternoon show. Five comedians take to the stage with a variety of styles and stories to tell, and, with an 18+ entry required, you know you’re in for some adult comedy. If you like your jokes rude and silly, you’re in for a real treat. John Kearns in particular brings a manic and fast-paced routine to the stage that will leave you shaking with laughter long after you’ve left. They’re a young, daring bunch of comedians who have put together a fantastic show, so if you’re still recovering from the night before, then this is the perfect remedy.

Just The Tonic At The Tron, 4 - 28 Aug (not 16, 23), 12.30pm (2.00pm), £5.00 - £7.00, fpp111.
tw rating 4/5 [lam]

Making Life Taste Funny

Sean Turner And Graham Oakes/Laughing Horse Free Festival

Sometimes comedy goes beyond what a performer says and does; the appearance and even accent of a comedian can be just as important. While both Oakes and Turner hail from the North East, you could mistake them for being from completely opposite ends of the country. Oakes is tall, well-spoken and charismatic, taking an innocent yet slightly cheeky approach to his humour. Turner, however, is Geordie through and through, and with his manic eyes and thick bracing accent, there really is no escaping his interactive performance, especially in a staff meeting-room crammed like a tin of sardines. Mixed with some sweet yet disturbing poems from special guest Barry Fox, this is one incredibly peculiar but altogether pretty decent show.

Laughing Horse @ The Three Sisters, 5 - 28 Aug, 12.00pm (12.55pm), free, fpp112.
tw rating 3/5 [ng]

Max And Ivan Are Holmes And Watson

Ditto Productions

...and a dolphin, a nude Scotsman and a host of prostitutes. There are hundreds of Holmes adaptations out there, and I am not afraid to say that this must be the best. We are taken from Baker Street to Chicago in a flawlessly choreographed hour of fast-paced brilliance of blockbuster-quality on less than a B-movie budget. With only two bodies, Max and Ivan create a world full of characters so clear-cut that they can all take to the stage at once, arguing and fighting yet still keep us captivated. Sound effects, flashbacks, theme tunes – nothing is beyond the range of this breathless production, which brings out the ridiculous in Holmes and sublimely exploits our understanding of the magic of theatre.

Pleasance Courtyard, 3 – 29 Aug (not 16), 3.30 pm (4.30pm), £8.50 - £11.00, fpp116
tw rating 5/5 [ja]

Mervyn Stutter's Pick Of The Fringe - 20th Year!

‘Pick of the Fringe’, now in its twentieth year, is a veritable Edinburgh institution, offering a preview of eight acts from across the spectrum: theatre rubs up against music, comedy nestles with dance. Pink-suited and gregarious, compère Mervyn Stutter is an engaging and clearly enthusiastic host, often to be heard chucking from the stage-side as the acts perform. The acts themselves are well-selected, complementary without becoming repetitive, and Stutter’s enthusiasm is contagious – the audience cheer and whoop their way through previews of existentialist puppet shows (‘The Table’) and improvised musicals (‘Showstoppers’) alike. It’s hard to get a real feel for an Edinburgh show in ten minutes, but ‘Pick of the Fringe’ gets very, very close.

Pleasance Courtyard, 6 - 28 Aug (not 10, 17, 24), 1.00pm (2.30pm), £7.50 - £10.00, fpp117
tw rating 4/5 [eb]

Mind Reading For Breakfast

‘Psychic’ Psychologist – Rob Bailey

A bout of “psychic” interaction over a coffee and croissants is a pleasant way to spend a languid morning mid-Fringe. Bailey’s polished performance, although slow at times, is engaging and humorous, with the man himself being very likeable. Acknowledging his scepticism for claimed telepathic ability within the arts makes his mimicry and gentle teasing funny. Bailey culminates by guessing pre-written secrets, sticking them to his forehead and “channelling their cosmic energy”. The criticism that his relatively small-scale tricks have been used to exhaustion across world stages is fair, and I fail to see what makes Bailey any different. Perhaps a change of target audience for this glorified magic show would put Bailey on to a winner.

Sweet Grassmarket, 4 - 29 Aug, 11.30am (12.30pm), £8.00 - £9.00, fpp120.
tw rating 3/5 [hb]

Monsters: A History Of Villainy

Monsters / PBH’s Free Fringe

The audience is greeted with the caveat that this is a ‘comedy-lecture’, but unfortunately this show is neither funny nor informative. Shambolically ordered, the comedians lurch awkwardly around loosely structured points, bursting into ‘Eternal Flame’ for absolutely no reason. The lowest point is the excruciating rendition of Kylie Minogue’s ‘Can’t Get You Out Of My Head’ with the ‘yous’ changed to ‘Jews’ and sung by Hitler. The only redeeming features are the pre-recorded musings of God, which are actually quite funny, and special guest Alex Chapman,

who makes his case for Scooby Doo being a villainous enemy of personal enterprise. Unfortunately the majority of this show, which theoretically sounds quite good, turns out to be incoherent at best.

Finger’s Piano Bar, 6 – 27 Aug (not 8, 15, 22), 5.30pm (6.30pm), free, fpp121.
tw rating 2/5 [km]

The Oxford Revue: But Seriously

It’s a cliché that Oxbridge comedy troupes over-rely on spoofs. Good job that this set begins with that most tired of parodic flogging horses: the bad cop show. But, turns out, it’s a) not all they have for us, and b) is brilliantly executed. The house is nearly full and everyone’s on their side from the off. The performers are brilliant, possessing a real sense of fun and displaying abundant chemistry; when material goes awry (as it sometimes does), they are able to get back to the what the audience want, which is the only skill comedians really need. The sketches have obviously been written with meticulous care and attention, resulting in comedy not exactly cerebral, but certainly smart.

Underbelly, Cowgate, 4 – 28 Aug (not 17), 4.25pm (5.25pm), £6.00 - £10.50, fpp129.
tw rating 4/5 [jh]

DANCE & PHYSICAL THEATRE

Snails And Ketchup

Ramesh Meyyappan In Association With Iron-Oxide

Rarely have I witnessed a piece of theatre that stunned me as much as ‘Snails and Ketchup’, a darkly comic tale of a young boy whose desire to escape his dysfunctional family leads him to an arboreal existence amongst the treetops. Portraying the story through a fusion of physical comedy and animation, Ramesh Meyyappan creates an incredibly powerful piece of theatre that revolves around the focal point of wonder. With astounding aerial performances and an impeccable use of mime, this undeniably unique production is able to stir the deepest emotions through the use of actions alone. With an original live score from pianist and composer Tze, which plays to Meyyappan’s every move, this is an incredible, unmissable production.

New Town Theatre, 4 - 28 Aug (not 9, 16, 23), 5.00pm (6.00pm), £10.00 - £13.00, fpp177.
tw rating 5/5 [aa]

State of Mind

Z Theatre Company

The flyer for ‘State of Mind’ quotes Einstein: “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”. Repetition can be both captivating and infuriating, locking us in, even as we want out; it can make us question the limits of rational being. However, in ‘State of Mind’ - much of which takes place in silence - repetition achieves none of these things. There are some good ideas, but the necessary tension and suspense aren’t there. The performers seem more absent-minded than insane and everything lasts slightly too long without ever really building to very much. The lacklustre routines leave one’s attention to drift; repetition, it turns out, can also be just plain dull.

theSpace on Niddry Street, 8 - 18 Aug (not 14), times vary, £3.00 - £5.00, fpp177.
tw rating 2/5 [lm]

EVENTS

Young Dawkins: What I Know About Women

Young Dawkins

In the small basement room of The Royal Oak, ‘Young Dawkins’ - Scotland’s slam poetry champion 2011 - presents a series of confessional poems. Switching between a conversational, story-telling style about his experiences with women to a beat poetry performance with some of Edinburgh’s Click Clack Club, Dawkins enthral's the audience in this intimate environment. The poetry ranges from wryly humorous to deeply emotional; in his final piece Dawkins leaves a will and testament that is both heart-breaking and elating. The accompanying music brings an exciting element to this hour and evokes some of Dawkins’ influences: Kerouac and Bukowski. An interesting and alternative way to spend an hour in one of Edinburgh’s best loved folk venues.

The Royal Oak, 8 - 25 Aug, times vary, free, fpp n/a.
tw rating 4/5 [ec]

MUSIC

Elsa Jean McTaggart

Beautiful and willowy in her jumpsuit and red sky-scraper heels, Elsa Jean McTaggart is a mean fiddler and all round folk musician. With a voice to match her looks, McTaggart gives a sweet and upbeat autobiographical set that engages the audience, singing about her eccentric childhood in the mountains of Scotland, life in Gran Canaria and being on the road with husband/keyboad player/driver/stage manager/press contact Gary Lister. Chatty and funny, you might be mistaken in thinking this is comedy instead of music, but when she does sing - which she doesn’t do quite enough, as there are quite a few instrumental tracks - her voice is as charming as her anecdotes.

SpaceCabaret @ 54, 5 - 28 (not 7, 14, 21), 15.30pm (4.15pm), £5.00 - £7.00, fpp204.
tw rating 4/5 [dg]

The Twoks

This musical duo is a delight to watch. The rich, layered sound that was produced by only an electric violin and drum kit was stunning: I sat transfixed through the hour-long set as Aussie’s Xani Kolac and Mark Leahy showcased their musical genius. Highlights included an improvised song that culminated in an explosion of melodic and tuneful sound, and had me mesmerised from start to finish. The passion that Kolac showed for her work was palpable, and the only downfall of the evening was that this did not rub off on the audience unanimously – some were asleep, others sat woodenly in their seats. For a better atmosphere, their venues need to be fuller, so please go and see this show.

Assembly George Square, 8 - 10, 15 - 17, 22 Aug, 10.30pm (11.40pm), £8.00 - £10.00, fpp222.
tw rating 4/5 [ch]

THEATRE

Alice In Wonderland And Other Adventures With Lewis Carroll

DV Productions

As a grandfatherly Lewis Carroll, Richard Smithies reads various episodes from ‘Alice’s Adventures In Wonderland’, ‘Through The Looking Glass’, ‘The Hunting Of The Snark’ and ‘Sylvie And Bruno’, intermittently bursting into song. Although this show claims to be suitable for children, you need a very long attention-span to enjoy this, and it seems better suited to adults nostalgic for the original texts. Hearing the lesser-known work is more interesting than the recital of ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland’, which has been so often adapted far more dramatically, while the songs, set to music by Smithies himself, are for the most part pretty forgettable, but it does end well with the most amusing ‘Mad Gardener’s Song’. Not curious, but quaint.

New Town Theatre, 4 – 28 Aug (not 16), 11.30am (12.30pm), £5.00 - £8.00 (F £22.00 - £25.00), fpp237.
tw rating 2/5 [km]

Bosom Buddies

Jack Klaff

Wow! This is one impressive one-man show. Never before have I seen an actor sustain so many different characters in intensely detailed conversation with one another as well as with the audience. Klaff plays an exhaustive list of well-known (as well as less well-known) personalities - including Jung, Freud, Gandhi, Jackie Kennedy and Churchill, to name but a few - in this intricate performance boasting some very witty moments. This is not the kind of show to go and see after a heavy night; you will certainly need your wits about you in order to keep up with it all. However, if you are looking for some intellectual stimulation and an amazing one-man performance, this is the show for you.

Hill Street Theatre, 5-16 Aug, 5:30pm (6:45pm), £7.00 - £8.50, fpp246
St Georges West, 19-29 Aug, 5:30pm (6:45pm), £7.00 - £8.50, fpp246
tw rating 4/5 [efs]

Double Act

Junction 2 Productions

Sometimes an act just needs to warm up. Junction 2 start off shaky but eventually get the audience on side with the story of Eddie and Arthur, variety comedians in the ‘Morecambe And Wise’ vein, who unravel during a gruelling tour. Mix the subject matter with the raw performers and unrefined dialogue and at times it resembles a low-budget ‘behind the laughter’ documentary, yet despite a few

creaky moments, it is elevated by strong characterisation. Relentless backstage banter and well-timed sight gags serve to enliven and entertain, and it also emphasises the desperate defence-mechanism humour destroying Arthur, who is played with a mad-eyed intensity by writer Martyn Grahame. Occasionally corny, it remains smart and funny – quite fitting for a teatime double act.

theSpaces @ Surgeon’s Hall, 5 - 27 Aug, times vary, £6.00 - £7.00, fpp257.
tw rating 3/5 [df]

Click

Pink Lady Productions

Three actors, a nearly bare stage, and a ticking metronome: Pink Lady Productions might find their play ‘Click’ is a tough sell at the Fringe. But though short on laughs, this quiet, thoughtful play deserves an engaged and attentive audience. ‘Click’ tells the story of Nell, an old woman compulsively recalling the traumatic events of her childhood. The script has won a number of awards, and you can see why: it’s a tight, intelligent piece of writing, constantly reflecting back on itself. The script returns to certain key words and phrases which come to mean something different and more complex each time they are repeated. This is especially worth seeing for the excellent central performance by Jan Thomas.

theSpaces @ Surgeons Hall, 4 - 20 Aug (not 7, 14), 2.10pm (2.50pm), £6.00 - £7.00, fpp250.
tw rating 4/5 [nw]

The Kidnapper's Guide

Article 19

A ne'er-do-well, a blind guy, and a Lenny type [y’know, ‘Of Mice And Men’ – big and slow] attempt kidnap. They don’t manage to bag any ransom but they do garner their audience’s most enthusiastic laughter during a truly delectable hour. Article19 deliver high jinx in this bungled kidnap farce in which the kidnapped is Jerry, once a star of the talkies, now on a downward trajectory towards obscurity. The play has a lovely, silver-screen feel to it, and a particular delight is Carmen, Jerry’s Puerto Rican wife, a lascivious Latino in leopard-print capri-pants. However, it is almost unfair to single someone out when each performance is an absolute joy. Lovely, with brilliantly-executed original writing; Article19 can kidnap me any day.

Zoo, 5 - 16 Aug, 7.00pm (8.00pm), £5.50 - £7.50, fpp239.
tw rating 5/5 [ls]

Proper Night

OutHouse Collective

Would you take drugs from a homeless man who’d just tried to eat you? Me neither, but the teenagers in ‘Proper Night’ do so after twenty minutes of the sort of unlikely events which only really happen in fiction. The drugs typify the problems with ‘Proper Night’, which is full of overblown reactions and excessive “SHOUTING!” in lieu of emoting. However, the more sensible sections are well-observed and well-acted. Dorky hanger-on Derek is great, with the script largely convincing in its depiction of teenage alienation, and the ending is truly wicked. ‘Proper Night’ could do with tightening in some places and being toned down in others, but it’s certainly an enjoyable production despite its minor faults.

Princes Mall, 6 – 12 Aug, 1.00pm (2.00pm), free, fpp290.
tw rating 3/5 [ab]



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