

# ThreeWeeks

## EDINBURGH



**Oh my good Godley:  
Janey questions Ashley**



**CHRIS MARTIN**



**SOPHIE WILLAN**

As part of the  
Edinburgh Art Festival  
Villa Design Group presents:

**Part III of  
The Inauguration of  
the Russian Season**

# The House of Adelaida Ivanovna

August 2nd 2014  
to August 31st 2014  
12pm - 9pm

**Performances**  
**Thursday - Saturday**  
**7 - 9pm**

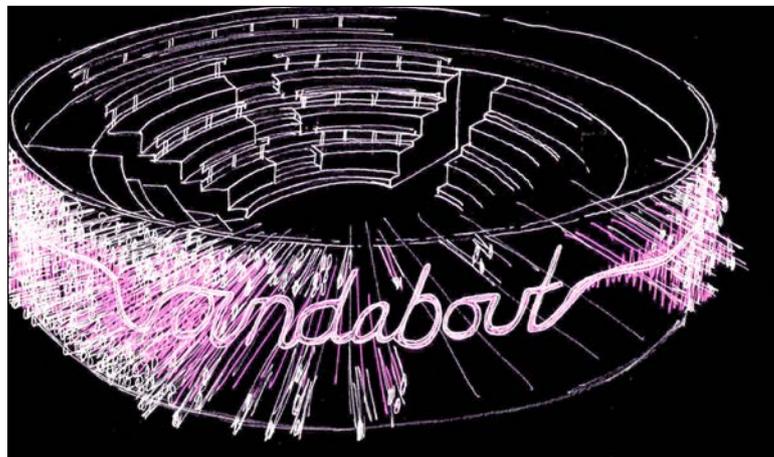
*Top Floor Ocean Terminal*  
*Ocean Drive*  
*Edinburgh EH6 6JJ*

*"chicly  
conniving"*  
*Herald Scotland*

*"an audacious  
statement on  
form, function  
and how a  
space's narrative  
can be shaped"*  
*The List*



## Paines Plough's Fringe pop-up in Roundabout



**Paines Plough will be familiar to anyone with even a passing interest in the Fringe's theatre strand, the acclaimed new writing theatre company having presented countless shows at the Festival over the years.**

Though this year the company is doing

something extra special at the Fringe by bringing their own performance space with them, called Roundabout. And while it's become fashionable of late to refer to all the temporary theatres built in Edinburgh for the Fringe festival as 'pop-up venues', this one really is.

"Roundabout is a completely self-contained, 168-seat in-the-round auditorium", Paines Plough Co-Artistic Director James Grieve explains. "It flat packs into a single lorry and pops up

in a day, requiring no tools or specialist skills to assemble. The lighting and sound systems are bespoke designed and utilise completely new technology which is incredibly energy efficient. It's a dynamic, immersive space which wraps the audience around the action and creates a bear pit atmosphere".

The new venue is popping up for the very first time at the Fringe this year, in the Summerhall complex, hosting shows presented by both Paines Plough itself, and guest companies including Northern Stage. After which the Roundabout venue will go on tour. "We're working with local organisations everywhere we visit to programme a festival of community work around our own productions" Grieve continues. "The venue will host everything from local amateur and youth theatre productions to concerts, dance, talks, comedians. There's even a wedding in Barnsley!"

While giving the theatre group their own Edinburgh space is an added bonus, Paines Plough have really invested in creating the Roundabout construction so they can take theatre to places where there are no suitable venues to perform. "We're lucky to

have the best playwrights in the world here in the UK", Grieve says of the motivation behind the project, "and we think everyone should have the chance to see brilliant new plays. But in many parts of the country there are no theatres. Roundabout means we can take a theatre to those places and pop it up in a school hall or sports centre or warehouse, bringing a unique venue and a host of great new plays to people's doorsteps".

But staying with the Edinburgh season for now, Grieve talks through his programme. "We have four of our own productions: the multi-award winning 'Lungs' by Duncan Macmillan, a new thriller from George Devine Award winner Alexandra Wood called 'The Initiate', a magical show for children seven plus which we're co-producing with Half Moon called 'Our Teacher's A Troll' by 'Matilda The Musical' writer Dennis Kelly, and 'Every Brilliant Thing', also by Duncan Macmillan, which we're co-producing with Pentabus. We're also hosting new work from The Royal Exchange Manchester, Northern Stage, Greyscale and The Lyric Hammersmith's Secret Theatre Company".

## Referendum debates run throughout much of the 2014 Festival Of Politics

**In a year when politics - and one political debate in particular - is at the top of most agendas in Scotland, Edinburgh's annual Festival Of Politics takes place this week, with the upcoming referendum on Scottish independence unsurprisingly a theme running throughout the three-day programme of talks and debates.**

Scottish journalists George Kerevan and Alan Cochrane will discuss the various issues around Scottish independence, expanding on their co-written book on the topic, in which the former advocated yes to Scotland splitting from the United Kingdom, and the latter set out the case for no. Meanwhile, looking beyond

coverage of the independence debate in Scotland and the rest of the UK, Isobel Fraser will chair a panel of international journalists exploring how the referendum campaign is being viewed elsewhere around the globe. And James Naughtie will lead a discussion on what Scotland might look like in six years time with either outcome.

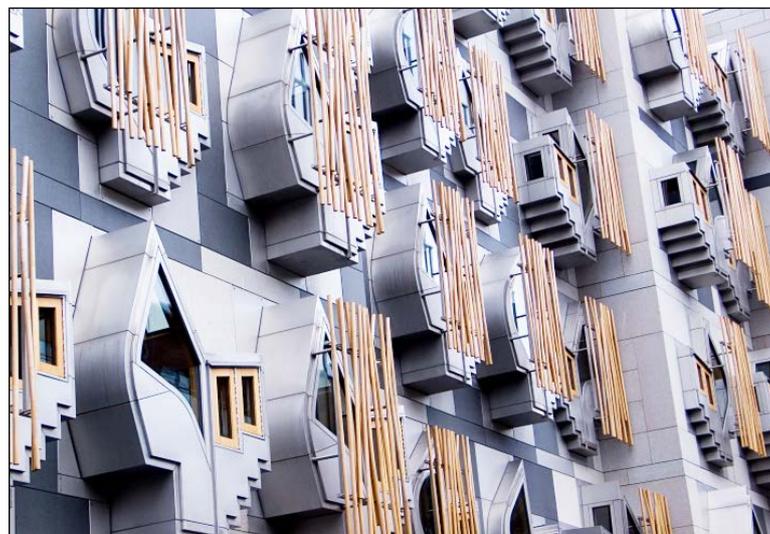
Not every session is entirely referendum focused mind, though sessions on immigration, poverty and Scottish identity may all also touch on what impact a break-away from the UK could have in Scotland. Either way, the Festival Of Politics is set to raise many an interesting topic as it takes over the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood from 15-17 Aug.

Launching this year's programme last month, the Presiding Officer of Parliament Tricia Marwick MSP told reporters: "When the Festival opens, it will be just over one month to go until the referendum. It is only right

that we use the Festival Of Politics to give people the space to gather and discuss the implications of the important decision being made. From oil to currency, Europe to the

economy and immigration to poverty, we are offering three days of thought provoking and inspiring sessions within our unique building".

More at [www.festivalofpolitics.org.uk](http://www.festivalofpolitics.org.uk)



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## CARO WRITES>

Ooof, I'm tired and it's not even the middle of middle week yet. Well, it's not when I'm writing this, even if it is by the time you are reading it. I'm writing this at the end of Week 1, and frankly, I just want to go to bed already. Then again, it is currently 4am as I type these words, such is the way with our Weekly Edition print deadlines, and I had a busy day navigating the Festival in the rain before I sat down to finish off this magazine.

It's a while since I complained about the Edinburgh weather (though stalwart Festival friends who've been Fringing for decades might well remember that I used to moan about it all the time) but I kind of feel the need to let off steam. Mainly because I keep ending up actually giving off steam, in warm venues, after getting wet on my way to a show. And seriously, I get sad when the rain won't stop, because it puts a damper on everything. It's sad to see flyerers looking deflated. Comedians down-beat. Actors unmotivated.

However, I can now reveal that the weather is going to improve dramatically by the time you read this. By the power of my mind. Though I did just sneak a peak at BBC Weather and it's saying Wednesday will be quite nice. So I hope you are sitting reading this outside, or by an open window, and making plans to walk to your next venue rather than taking another taxi.

And perhaps you might use this copy of ThreeWeeks to help you choose what that show might be. We've got plenty of reviews in this issue, plus features featuring the brilliant people behind some of the best shows happening at the Festival. That includes Sophie Willan, Erin Kamler, Rebecca Chill and Bradley Leech just for starters, plus comedian Chris Martin; spoken word type Lucy Ayrton; musical makers Scott Gilmour and Claire McKenzie; Tom Blackmore, creator of 'Dreams Of Peace And Freedom'; Curtis Uhlemann of 'The Warriors: A Love Story'; and 'Claustrophobia' writer Jason Hewitt. Plus there's an article in which lots of comedians conspire to heckle Christ, and finally, cover star Janey Godley has a quick chat with her equally cover starry daughter Ashley Storrie.

That enough for you to get your teeth into? I reckon. See you next week.  
**Caro @ ThreeWeeks**

## Letter To Edinburgh: from Nat Luurtsema

**Nat Luurtsema is taking a year off the Edinburgh Fringe. So she sent everyone else this letter.**

Hi guys!! I'm hearing a great buzz about your show and that review definitely read like a four.

I am not at the Fringe this year. Festival PR being the exhilaratingly pointless arms-race it is, I doubt any of you have noticed. But it is true, The Luurts is not with you. She is at home experimenting with giving herself new nicknames. But let's spread a more exciting rumour that I'm in a movie or something... use your imagination but keep it realistic: "Nat's going to be the new Wolverine, unpaid, just travel expenses, but good exposure" type of thing. Thanks.

This is my first August away from the Fringe in a decade. (A decade. I am so terribly terribly old, how am I still alive?) It wasn't an easy decision but I reasoned that if I missed Edinburgh, I had a souvenir to console myself, my debt from 2011 onwards. Sweet memories. Though last year I did my stand-up show on the Free Fringe and actually made profit. So like a ruined gambler who's miraculously won, I am stepping away from the blackjack table. I beat the house! Sort of.

But enough about me, how are you? How's your show? Uh huh uh huh. Good stuff. They're all bastards except us. Etc. Are your legs weirdly muscly from constantly walking uphill, while your upper half hangs limp and malnourished? Do you get that thing where your back hurts and it feels suspiciously like a kidney is leaking ethanol? I've had it too, I'm sure it's fine. Don't Google it.

I always felt that Edinburgh was so tough that I should deny myself nothing all month. This is a good system but the consequences are dramatic. Every day I would look less and less like the nice photo on

my poster, until by Week Two I could flyer for myself in peaceful anonymity ("I hear she's amazing, no I've never got to meet her"). This is not an option by Week Three, as the damage is so severe I look like an aged relative of myself.

I would try to halt the physical destruction of myself, keeping my haggis intake to every other day, but you can't live a life strangled by rules, so be kind to yourself on that front. You're over a week in, so I assume the vegetables you bought at the beginning, declaring that this is the way it's going to be this month, have rotted. Sad for them, but consider it a necessary loss. You don't need to pretend any more, with that courgette judging you, now go to Mother India.

I'm coming up in a week's time to do Beth O'Brien's latest spectacular feat of a gig, Sketch Transfer Deadline, in aid of Cancer Research UK, where sketch groups all trade members for one night, promising to wash them and return them promptly. Which brings me to the purpose of this letter: feel free to chuck any gigs my way 19-21 August, plus if you've got a spare room (or... just some spare room) I probably need to sleep somewhere, at some point between four and nine am.

Just remember, you're doing really well. This is all character-building, and your victories and humiliations are entirely your business because everyone is too busy worrying about themselves. How liberating is that?



TW

**'AN ASTOUNDING MAGICIAN, COMIC AND MIND READER'**  
★★★★★ THREE WEEKS

# ALAN HUDSON

TRICK TEASER

7:45PM (AGE 14+)  
30 JULY - 25 AUGUST NOT 13TH  
GILDED BALLOON 0131 622 6552  
FOLLOW ALAN ON TWITTER: @ALANMAGICIAN

# TW PODCAST

ThreeWeeks.co.uk/podcasts

Get online for the audio guide to the Fringe

# C the Festival



New Theatre of Ottawa  
**The Player's Advice to Shakespeare**  
30 Jul-25 Aug 7.15pm C nova



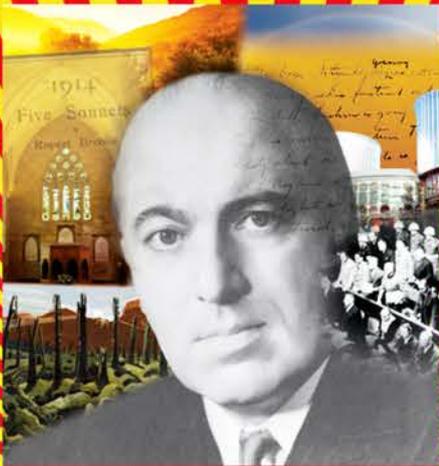
No Prophet Theatre Company  
**Chatroom**  
30 Jul-25 Aug 8.20pm C nova



Sober Stag Productions  
**The Dirty Talk**  
30-25 Aug 4.40pm C



Peppermint Muse  
**Lavender Junction**  
30 Jul-25 Aug 11.30am C nova



English Cabaret with C theatre  
**Dreams of Peace and Freedom**  
31 Jul-25 Aug 7.45pm C south



Straylight Australia and Bee Loud  
**The Road to Skibbereen**  
10-25 Aug 2.15pm C



Oneoff Productions  
**Parade**  
14-24 Aug 8.10pm C too



John Burns  
**Mallory: Beyond Everest**  
30 Jul-25 Aug 3.00pm C nova



Sally E Dean  
**Something's in the Living Room**  
6-25 Aug 3.00pm C cubed



Haddangse  
**Brush**  
30 Jul-24 Aug 12.00pm C



Peppermint Muse  
**Altamont**  
30 Jul-25 Aug 2.20pm C nova



DEM Productions  
**Lysistrata**  
30 Jul-25 Aug 8.30pm C

With more than 200 shows and events across our venues in the heart of Edinburgh, we celebrate our 23rd Fringe with an inspiring international programme of cabaret, comedy, circus, dance, musicals, theatre and family shows. See it all with C venues.

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box office hotline **0845 260 1234** online programme **www.CtheFestival.com**

## Sophie Willan: Novice Detective



Photo: Kat Gollock

**Stand-up Sophie Willan becomes the Novice Detective for Fringe audiences this year as she retells the true story of how she and her “slightly psychic” gran once set out to find her missing father. Detective mac donned, magnifying glass in hand, we sought out the lady herself to find out more.**

**TW: OK Novice Detective, without giving everything away, tell us a bit about the true story behind this show?**

SW: When I was a child my gran and I turned detective to track down my missing father. A series of curious events led to us hunting down a nineties popstar! Whether it was him or not, you'll have to come to the show to find out.

**TW: Why did you decide to turn this story into a show?**

SW: This story seemed to be something that friends and colleagues thought I should write as a show. So I did. Simple as that.

**TW: How much is fact and how much is fiction?**

SW: I'd say it's 95% true. There are odd details that have been honed to make the show as a whole work; a little poetic/comedic license, you know.

**TW: You describe your gran as “slightly psychic”. How slightly? How psychic?**

SW: Well, it's more that she has incredible instincts. And sometimes, she can predict the future. She knew George Michael was gay ten years before he did.

**TW: The audience gets involved. What role do they play?**

SW: I get the audience involved in different ways, but I pick one audience member at random to play my detective assistant for the duration of the show. This role of side-kick, and the dynamic between them

and myself, me as the lead detective, feeds heavily into the narrative and the comedy of the show. This is what makes the show so different, it's not just audience interaction, it's audience interaction with a narrative. I've performed this show at over 50 venues across the UK and have had all sorts of sidekicks along the way. It really makes the show feel fresh, fun and exciting; not just for the audience but for me too.

**TW: How does 'Novice Detective' compare to your more conventional stand-up?**

SW: Well, for a start it has a narrative. There's also a set, confetti canons and a wild dance-number-come-lap-dance at the end. Though my stand-up sets are quite alternative they don't tend to cram all that in!

**TW: You seem at home in that detective's mac. Do you anticipate future shows on a sleuthing theme?**

SW: No, I don't think so. I've really enjoyed playing around with film noir and trashy afternoon detective spoofery,

but I picked it because it genuinely suited the theme of the show. I think backdrops, themes and metaphors in shows have to be very carefully thought out.'

**TW: And finally, who is the best detective of them all and why?**

SW: I love Jessica Fletcher! There's just something very calming about her lovely, little owl face. And I like that she does the most ridiculous things to get information; she's always on a case that leads to her turning up at a hotel or a hospital or something, incognito as her own distant relative from Lancashire. And her interpretation of a Lancashire lass is hilarious, it's basically Les Dawson, face full of slap, a bonnet and a feather bower in the afternoon. I love the comedy value of that show!

Read more from Sophie at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/sophiewillan](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/sophiewillan)  
'Sophie Willan: Novice Detective' is on at Zoo until 25 Aug.

TW

## Erin Kamler: Land Of Smiles

**Erin Kamler's musical 'Land Of Smiles' tackles the complex issue of human trafficking, interestingly casting a critical eye over the anti-trafficking movement. We spoke to Kamler about her research on this topic, the viewpoint she has reached, and why she chose musical theatre to share her message.**

**TW: The issue of human trafficking has been explored at the Fringe in the past, though interestingly your starting point is to cast a critical eye on the anti-trafficking movement, a cause I think most of us would be innately sympathetic towards. What is your criticism of this cause?**

EK: My criticism is that many of the policies designed to fight human trafficking often harm the very women they are supposedly intended to help. When people hear the word 'trafficking', they often think of young women held in bondage, forced into prostitution against their will. Now, this is certainly something that happens, it's a real and very serious problem. But often sex workers, many of whom are migrants seeking a better life in a country far from home,

know what they are getting into and do so by choice. Anti-trafficking initiatives, often funded by private donors and the US State Department, say they work hard to fight trafficking. But the problem is, many do this by trying to eradicate prostitution and curb migration, resulting in policies that can be harmful, rather than helpful, to women.

**TW: Do you believe the problems you identify are widespread?**

EK: The problems are numerous, complex, and yes, quite widespread. One of the problems we grapple with in the show is the 'push factors' that lead to women's irregular, aka 'illegal', migration.

Lipoh, one of the main characters, migrates from Burma's war-torn Kachin State to Thailand in search of work. As the story unfolds, we learn that the money she earns in the brothel where she works is actually allowing her to take care of her family and an entire community back home. We also learn about the conditions that led her to migrate; namely, the atrocities that are being committed by the Burmese government against the Kachin people. These 'push factors' were common themes among the women I interviewed in Thailand. The problem with the anti-trafficking movement is that it often fails address these push factors. Instead, NGOs



Photo: Rich Dyson

swoop into brothels and arrest the women working there in an effort to secure prosecutions. This does little to help the women's families and communities back home who are struggling to survive.

Another problem identified in the show is the ongoing debate between feminists over the issue of prostitution. 'Abolitionist' feminists believe that all prostitution is demeaning and oppressive to women, while 'pro-rights' feminists argue that sex workers have the right to consent and that voluntary sex work should not be considered a form of human trafficking. This debate affects policies on prostitution, which is still criminalised in many countries throughout the world. By criminalising women who engage in sex work, governments automatically set up a "victim-criminal binary", in which women who are caught working in the trade must either identify themselves as a "victim" of human trafficking or a "criminal" who has consented to working in the industry. Forcing women into these categories strips them of agency and reduces them to being pawns of the state.

**TW: As you say, there are clearly numerous elements to this issue and debate. Do you explore the various differing elements and perspectives in 'Land Of Smiles'?**

## Rebecca Chill & Bradley Leech: Travesti

**Women's stories, men's voices. It's a simple concept, but it creates a powerful piece, challenging society's perceived gender norms. 'Travesti' began with the real-life stories of ten women, discussing the traumatic and the mundane, from sexual assault to unruly body hair. And those stories are now retold by six male characters. We spoke to Rebecca Chill and Bradley Leech, Artistic Directors of Unbound Productions, about the motivation for and impact of the project.**

**TW: Let's start at the start, where did the idea come from for Travesti?**

RC: It was a growing realisation that there were a number of behaviours that I accepted as being "just what happens", but I wasn't sure why. And not only the sexist behaviour of men, those stories you so often hear of

women being cat-called or groped, but also the gendered social norms that women themselves follow, to the extent that you never really think about them, things like shaving their legs and wearing make up. It struck me as unusual that these are behaviours and norms we would never accept or expect the other way around.

**TW: Where do the stories that are told come from?**

RC: After we'd come up with the general concept for the show, we sent out a plea for stories over various social media platforms and had a good response. Some women contacted us saying that they loved the idea but didn't want to be interviewed, but other women jumped at the chance to tell their stories. In the end we interviewed ten women, a mixture of people we met for the first time through the project, and others we had known for years.

**TW: How true to the stories you were told are the stories we hear? Did you employ any dramatic licence?**

BL: There is, of course, a necessary dramatic licence that comes just

from the process of editing. There is also the dramatic licence in terms of character. Although the cast are playing six characters, the play is made of ten women's stories, so all of the cast have taken more than one voice to create their one character. The stories, however, are all true. There is no clever editing to make a story more dramatic than it is, they are true stories and the boys perform them with the exact tone, intonation and featuring all the same "ums", "ahs" and giggles that the women told them to us with.

**TW: How do the men in the cast feel about speaking the words of women talking about their personal experiences?**

RC: I think they feel it is a great responsibility. They have developed a real love and respect for the women who have shared their stories, and they have spoken at length about wanting to do those stories justice and the women proud.

**TW: The show encompasses female experiences both mundane and traumatic. How does it work putting different kinds of stories alongside each other?**



RC: It's an art of balance just like any other play. And although some of the stories may seem mundane, such as shaving body hair or wearing make up, when these stories so unique to women are told by men, they cease to be mundane and actually become fascinating pieces of social observation.

**TW: How have audiences responded to the piece? Is it generating the kind of debate that you hoped for?**

BL: Audiences have been incredibly positive, which is absolutely fantastic. The debate this piece causes is huge, and we're so pleased because that is



exactly what we hoped for. We've had people tweet us saying they're still talking about the show hours later, and that's the best we can really hope for.

Read more from Rebecca and Bradley at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/travesti](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/travesti)

'Travesti' is on at the Pleasane Dome until 25 Aug.

TW

EK: We cover many, yes. Every character in the show is based on composites of various people I interviewed during my research in Thailand. I try to explore, for example, the complexities of the Christian NGO worker who has dedicated her life to "saving" the girls caught in brothels, but who thinks that a better life means they should all become good Christian girls. I explore the policies of the Thai government through the character Achara, a Thai NGO worker whose mission is to build the rule of law in Thailand.

The idealistic motivations of the United States are explored through Emma, the American case worker who comes to Thailand wanting to "save the world", only to discover that things aren't as black and white as she first thought. Finally, issues of warfare, migration and allegiance to family and nation are explored through the character Soon Nu, the Kachin freedom fighter and Lipoh's 'auntie' who helps her cross the border into Thailand. Through these, and other, characters, we glimpse a world where there are more questions than answers, and where issues that once seemed abstract are now human and real.

**TW: You mentioned your study on this issue. Tell us about that. What kinds of people did you interview as part of it?**

EK: I've been researching issues related to trafficking and migration in Southeast Asia for the past five years as part of my PhD at the University Of Southern California's Annenberg School For Communication And Journalism. The musical, while fictional, is inspired by interviews with over 50 migrant women, primarily ethnic minority women from Burma, NGO employees both secular and faith-based, government officials, immigration officers, community-based migrant organisations and sex workers rights organisations. I found that each of these groups approaches the issue of trafficking from their own perspective and with their own agenda, yet each must adhere to policies that are being imposed on Thailand by the US State Department, which has made it a worldwide mandate to combat trafficking.

**TW: How has the research informed the fictional story told in 'Land Of Smiles'?**

EK: The show is designed to untangle and expose the complex interplay between these characters and their various agendas and needs. Since musicals are naturally emotional - music being a vehicle for moving the heart, not just the mind - the musical takes us more deeply into these characters' aspirations, dreams and shortcomings in a way that, I believe,

a policy report or an academic paper just cannot do.

**TW: I sense one of the points you are making is that, while human trafficking is of course an important issue, there are other important issues in Burma that are less well documented, and which are sometimes overlooked even by those who set out to protect the oppressed in the region. Am I right? If so, what are those issues?**

EK: Yes, you're absolutely right. It's the 'push factors' I mentioned - issues like warfare, poverty, and economic disparity that are being woefully overlooked by the international community. In Burma, the government has supposedly embarked on a reform process intended to promote democracy. But the problem is that numerous human rights abuses are still taking place throughout the country. This leads to migration and often, real circumstances of labour exploitation. But again, anti-trafficking policy stops short of dealing with any of these issues. Instead, the focus is on criminalising prostitutes and satisfying prosecution quotas.

**TW: Some people might be surprised that such serious and complex issues are being dealt with through musical theatre. What would you say to them?**

EK: I think musicals can be an extremely powerful story-telling vehicle for serious issues, because of the emotional nature of music, and the power of theatre as a live medium. When we witness a serious event through music, we engage in a different way, using all our senses and our emotional intelligence. Combine

this with a rational, critical look at the world through drama, and you have a very powerful tool for communicating complex issues.

Read more from Erin at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/erinkamler](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/erinkamler)

'Land Of Smiles' is on at Assembly George Square until 25 Aug.

TW

**In some News "Correction"**  
"When good news goes bad."  
**Dropkick Murphy's venue 289 5:15pm**  
**Aug 4-23 (not Sun) FREE ENTRY**  
**Plus SN: Extra, Espionage ven185 9pm**

## Chris Martin: Fringe responsibilliness



Photo: Kat Gollock

### TW INTERVIEWS

**Chris Martin is back with a brand new show at this year's Fringe - 'Responsibilliness' - an exploration of the responsibilities that come with age, or more to the point, the lengths he goes to in order to shirk them. We caught up with Chris to find out more about the show, his admirably complete knowledge of the McDonalds staff rating system, and why a move into musical comedy ain't likely to happen.**

**TW: There is a loose theme running through the show. When you put together a new full hour for Edinburgh, do you start with the theme or does it evolve as you choose which stories to tell?**  
CM: A bit of both. I start working on

stuff onstage, stuff I find funny or silly, and will then usually notice themes in the kind of things I'm writing about. And once I'm aware of a theme I'll start writing to it.

**TW: The responsibilities that come with growing older - and your bid to shirk them - are the basic theme this year. Are you really that big a shirker?**

CM: I have realised that the only things I actually try to do well these days are comedy, playing FIFA and cooking food, and then only if it's for someone else. I can't even be bothered to write a note properly in my notebook, because no one one checks my spelling or neatness, my handwriting is a disaster!

**TW: Does your success at recent Fringes result in even more responsibilities - ie the responsibility to better last year's show with this?**

CM: Not really. I just enjoy creating new material, and I've learnt how to get more material out of certain

subjects, so naturally each year should be better. And it's not like I have much else going on in my life apart from writing dumb jokes.

**TW: The McDonalds staff rating system - so those famous stars on badges - also runs through the new show. How did you become such an expert on it?**

CM: Simple. Mcdonalds.co.uk. Because they need the exposure!

**TW: Do you think the Fringe media could learn anything from Ronald McDonald when it comes to star rating systems?**

CM: Haha. Yes. They should start giving comedians badges to wear all day everyday with their reviews attached.

**TW: You admit to unashamedly liking the Big Mac seller in the show. What's your ideal McDonalds meal?**

CM: Fillet of fish medium, with Fanta.

**TW: Doesn't a sneaky McDonalds count as a healthy dinner during the Fringe?**

CM: Anything not battered is a victory.

**TW: I can't believe I've just asked four consecutive questions about McDonalds. I should keep this more local. Salt n Vinegar, or Salt n Sauce?**

CM: Salt n Vinegar. Licking your fingers after salt and vinegar crisps is one of the greatest things on earth.

**TW: There's a karaoke story in the show too. I take it a move into musical comedy isn't on the cards?**

CM: I'm the most tone deaf person on earth. I'd get egged offstage within one minute.

**TW: We're nearly mid-Festival now, is the show going well? What's been the best audience responses?**

CM: Yes it's been fun. The best thing that happened was when I got heckled about Rasputin. That's nothing to do with my show. And when I asked what it was all about, this posh old man said he was friends with my dad and I should ask him what it meant. Turns out it was my dad's friend David, who'd bought a ticket just to heckle me.

**TW: Well, I guess a ticket sale is a ticket sale! Finally a question that will only make sense to David and anyone else whose seen your show. What's your favourite question on Yahoo Answers?**

CM: Another man at one of my gigs had my favourite one. He asked Yahoo answers "if a man with one arm commits a crime how do the police handcuff him?" Delightful!

\*Chris Martin: Responsibilliness\* is on at Pleasance Courtyard until 24 Aug.

## Act To Act: Janey chats to Ashley

**Fringe legend Janey Godley, or "the slightly wicked godmother of Scottish comedy" if you want her own description, is back at the Festival. And this year's show 'Oh My Godley!' boasts not only outrageous stories a plenty, but also a Storrie, as in Ashley Storrie, as in Janey's award-winning comedian daughter. The awards being for the comedy, not the daughterhood I think.**

**With Storrie also hosting the late night show 'Pumped!' at The Voodoo Rooms this month, we thought this was the Festival to charge Godley with the task of interviewing her daughter about being a stand-up, and having one for a mum. Here goes...**

**Janey: Ashley, what's the worst thing about travelling and working with your mum?**

Ashley: You are my mum, why are you asking questions like you don't know who I am?

**Janey: OK, I tried to be a professional journalist there, but that never worked. What's it like living with me at the Fringe and travelling with me as comedian?**

Ashley: Well, the worst thing is when I'm out late having fun. You pretend you don't care if I stay out, but I can tell by your wee angry face that you want me to come home with you, as you need 50 hours sleep a day, coz you are quite old.

**Janey: Thanks for that. How do you feel when you are onstage and know I'm watching in the audience?**

Ashley: I feel like am being judged, not just by an audience, but by the person whose vagina I essentially broke in 1986.

**Janey: Technically my vagina isn't broken. Just ask your dad.**

Ashley: That's not what he said.

## Taking in the Chris

### TW REVIEWS

**ThreeWeeks Co-Editor Chris Cooke reviews comedy shows featuring, well, a Chris.**

How big a narcissist do you need to be to only review shows by comedians with the same name as you? This big apparently. Though I only set out on this endeavour after discovering there was an actual Chris Cook performing at the Festival this year. I mean, that's exactly my name. Give or take an 'e'.

But look at it this way. Ask anyone who performs at this Festival for tips on how to choose shows to see, and everyone will tell you - indeed they'll insist on it - that the best way to "do the Fringe" is to pick a show totally at random and take a punt on it. "Flick through the programme", they'll say, "pick a random page and jab your finger in a random fashion, and go see whatever you're now pointing at". But every time I do that I end pointing at the Fringe Society Annual General Meeting. And I've already seen that show, way back in 2008 (great dramatic build up, but no resignations, what an anti-climax).

And anyway, Grandad, who uses the Fringe Programme anymore? It's all online these days. And whatever you think of the Fringe's new website, I'm

pretty sure you can't flick any pages. So why not navigate the Fringe seeing only shows by people with the same name as you? In fact, I highly recommend it. Well, I do if your name is Chris. As you'll see from the reviews below, it's a strategy that's paid off pretty damn well so far, even if it has made me look like one of those "he gives everything four stars" kind of reviewers. Though the comedy Chrises are as yet far from exhausted, and I'll be posting more Chris show reviews online this week at [www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/chrisshows](http://www.ThreeWeeks.co.uk/chrisshows). Though if this run of 4/5s gets too dramatically broken maybe I'll get onto deed poll and become a Simon. Amstell, Munnery, even Mayo is in town. That'd work.

**Chris Martin: Responsibilliness (Phil McIntyre Entertainments/ Aura Talent Ltd)**

More into Yahoo Answers than Wikipedia, Chris Martin is mainly interested in the inane questions web-users ask, rather than in any actual trivia the net can provide. Though he did inform us that the McDonalds staff rating system now rewards a maximum of four stars, rather than the former five. Quite how a Big Mac seller might earn these stars is a (very) loose theme for the show, punctuating a series of expertly delivered life stories, with a little drama here and there, and plenty of big laughs throughout (even and especially with his "shit routine"). Whether he earns his four McDonalds stars I won't say, but Martin easily gets

**Janey: OK, moving on... what's the most consistent question you are asked at the Fringe?**

Ashley: The most consistent question I am asked is "aren't you somebody's daughter?" And I answer "isn't everyone?".

**Janey: What do you hate about my comedy the most?**

Ashley: I hate that every time I meet someone new they say "oh, I have heard your mum talk about you in her set".

**Janey: Why do you call me "the Judy Garland of Scottish comedy"?**

Ashley: Because I want to be the Liza Minelli of Scottish comedy, so if I keep implying it, it may stick.

**Janey: Have you ever thought about killing me in my sleep?**

Ashley: No. I would do it when you are awake so I could see the fear and mild amusement on your face as you thought it was a joke.

**Janey: Thank you.**

'Oh My Godley!' is on at Underbelly Bristo Square until 25 Aug.

'Pumped!' is on at The Voodoo Rooms until 24 Aug.



Photo: Rich Dyson

## A Question For Three: Massive Dad

What is the best life advice you've ever been given?



**Stevie Martin:** The best life advice I've ever received was from an old willow tree. She said "Que que na-to-ra, you will understand; Listen to your heart, you will understand; Let it break upon you like a wave upon the sand; Listen to your heart, you will understand". There was lots of repetition. I didn't get what she was saying at the time, probably because we all know that trees are full of shit, but now I see that it's all about going with the flow. For example, I quit my job to come to Edinburgh and, instead of enjoying myself here, I'm constantly terrified of the moment it ends when I have to go back to real life. We should all let it break upon us like waves upon the sand and accept that trees give great advice. (This is based on the popular Disney film 'Pocahontas' by the way. I'm not high).

**Liz Smith:** I'm a big advocator of the saying 'Never Apologise, Never Explain'. Especially if you've chosen to perform comedy, because apologising and explaining come very naturally. Particularly if your friends have come all the way to Edinburgh to support you, and have caught the show on a "quiet" day. In MD we operate a strict close-ranks policy. Other than that, my mother once told me to play Monopoly with any man I'm thinking of marrying. I think the idea is to test what they're like in the property market. But my mum isn't married and doesn't own any property.

**Tessa Coates:** Draco dormiens nunquam titillandus. Brush your teeth. Get plenty of vitamins. Stop telling people your style icon is Miss Honey. For heaven's sake, buy some proper shoes. Will you stop trying to eat that. Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your own living room. Seriously, put down that croissant, you're allergic to wheat. Be with someone who gives you the same feeling as when you see your food coming in a restaurant. Go big or go home. And something about carrying a pig up a mountain, which I have forgotten, but which I like to think was about taking the first step, no matter how far away your destination feels.

Massive Dad is on at the Pleasance Courtyard until 24 Aug.

## shows of the comedy Fringe

four of mine (though we do still mark out of five).

Pleasance Courtyard, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Chris Cooke]

**Chris Turner: Pretty Fly (Fluid Thinking)**

However strong your passion for Dre, a career in hip-hop is going to be tricky if you're a privately educated white boy from suburban Manchester. Not because of race, you'll just likely

lack the life experiences that make for credible rap. So hip-hop fanatic and decent rap-deliverer Chris Turner is wise to have instead turned to stand-up. Though if your comedy draws heavily on real life, as Turner's does, a few more life-dramas would be useful here too. Nevertheless, he makes good use of his limited story bank - disapproving mother, flunking college, first love interest - partly by scattering groansome (in a Tim Vine-

style good way) puns throughout the proceedings. Certainly one to watch, and therefore worth watching now.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 25 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Chris Cooke]

**Chris Cook: Charlatan (Chris Cook Magic / PBH's Free Fringe)**

So, other Chris Cook, what have you got? Well, an entertaining hour of tricks and patter, that's what, with enough magical twists to generate

some post-show mental rewinds ("now, when did he set that up?"). It isn't the slickest magic show, for obvious budgetary reasons, though tricks can be better without the slick. True, some of the close-up magic was a little too close-up even in a smallish venue; that budget, when Cook gets it, could be spent on some kind of video set up perhaps. But the gasps from the front-row meant this wasn't too problematic. Cook's show may not yet warrant five stars, but it was certainly worth the five pounds I dropped in his hat on exiting.

Voodoo Rooms, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Chris Cooke]

**Chris Kent: Uncorked**

A video camera recorded me walking into this show. A documentary's being made we're told. And after an hour in Kent's world, complete with Mum, Dad, little brother and the family dog, it's a documentary I'd quite like to see. Kent's family and friends feature heavily in his always entertaining and often very funny stories of growing up in the rough end of Cork. And while you've no idea how much comedic license is employed, you do feel quite close to this clan by the show's conclusion. The evidence then produced of the events just described was a nice touch, even if it did feel like a bit like an after-thought. Nevertheless, 'Chris Kent: Uncorked' left you charmed and smiling.

Gilded Balloon, until 25 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Chris Cooke]

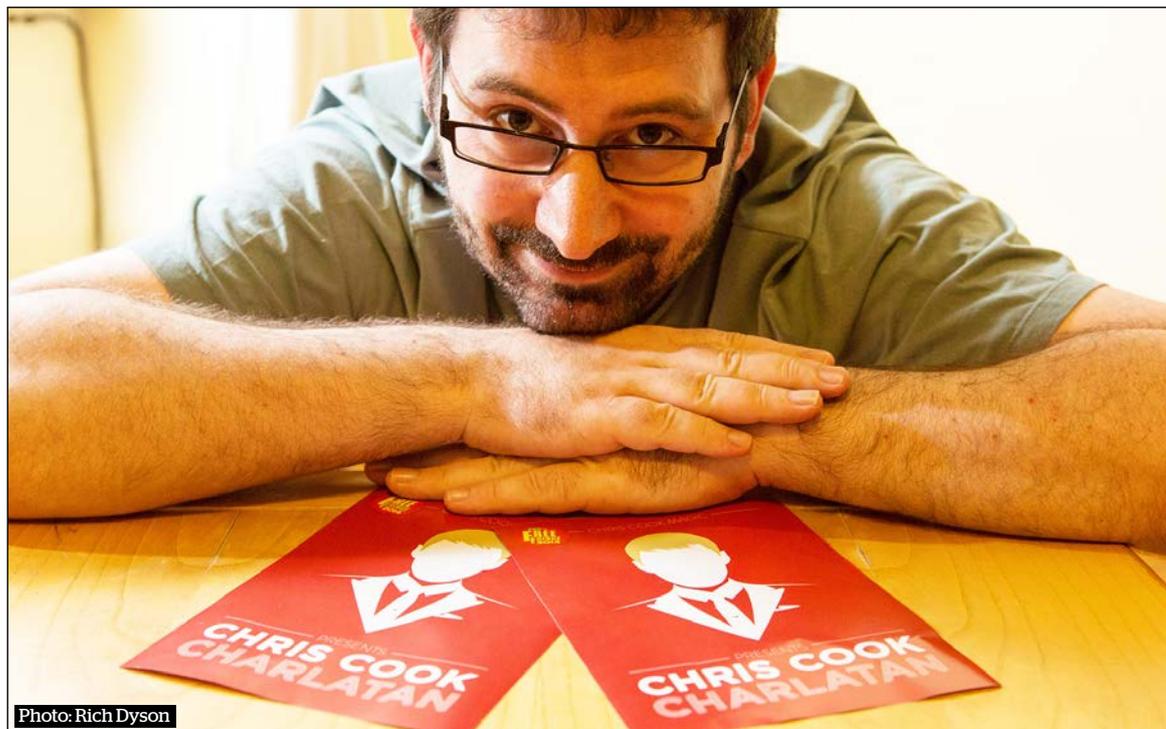


Photo: Rich Dyson

## The penis on the posters Who Dunit?

### Let's look at the Five Suspects

Remember that time Kunt & The Gang distributed cock n ball stickers all over Edinburgh, ensuring every comedian with a poster stuck to a wall now had some male genitalia added to their printed face? Well, at least that year it was a 'thing'. But what if you find some similar graffiti has been added to your 2014 Fringe publicity? What can it mean? Who can be responsible? Short & Curly, in something of a 'Who Dunit' mood this Fringe, consider the suspects.

**The Flyerer.** Desperate for money before the start of the next academic year, the flyerer accepts work distributing bits of paper for a comedian they are told is amazing but don't even know. As the heavens open up, passers-by treat them like a lepers, and they see the face of their comedian overlord grinning down at them. As they reach into their pocket for a tissue to blow their cold filled nose they happen upon a black permanent marker pen, and the thought occurs "Perhaps this comedian could do with some genitalia protruding from their forehead?"

**The Bitter Comedian.** Downtrodden, under-appreciated and under the radar. They look up at the big glossy poster of a more successful comedian grinning down at them. They try to convince a couple to come to see their show because it has a funny pun based on their name... plus it's free entry. The couple say that they'd love to, but they can't because they're off to go and see the big comedian with the huge poster you're standing in front of. The bitter comedian reaches into his or her pocket for another one of their hastily Photocopied flyers (because their real ones failed to get printed in time for the start of the Fringe) and they happen across a marker pen. "Perhaps this comedian could do with some genitalia entering their mouth...?"

**The Artist.** The world is a blank canvas, and the artist has been perfecting the perfect anatomically correct genitalia in school notepads and library books for years. They happen across this comedian's photo, no one is looking. They reach for their trusty sharpie. "Perhaps I could squeeze a cock and balls into his open hand?"

**The Local.** Every year they have to put up with this circus of performers descending on their beloved capital city. These exhibitionists getting in the way makes the Local's blood boil. It's too busy! Then suddenly this comedian's face is grinning down on them. It's time to take matters into their own hands, and the matter is a black permanent marker pen. "Perhaps this comedian could do with a cock and balls entering his ear hole?"

**The Reviewer.** The editor at Three Festivals Baby has refused a request to publish this Reviewer's review of a certain comedian where they describe the stand-up with a slang term for the male genitalia. As they see the image of that same comedian grinning down, they reach into their pocket and find a black marker pen. "Perhaps I can give a more succinct review on this poster instead? By drawing a cock and balls spurting into his eye socket?"

Who do YOU think it was?



Short & Curly - Who Dunit? is on at Ciao Roma until 23 Aug.



## Fringe comics heckle Christ

**As they always say, anyone's welcome to do stand-up at the Edinburgh Fringe, just as long as they can take the heckles. Though most comedians don't turn the heckling into their entire show. But most comedians aren't Jesus Christ.**

**Yes, with Edinburgh 2014 hosting the Messiah himself (who may look rather more like Aussie comedian Josh Ladgrove than you might have thought) in a show called 'Come Heckle Christ', we invited comics from across the Fringe to shout out their own heckles (aka questions) to the Almighty via the pages of ThreeWeeks. Take it away JC...**

**Jim Campbell (in 'Personal Space' at Underbelly Bristo Square): The general consensus is that human flesh tastes like chicken yet the body of Christ you get in church is basically a biscuit. What's going on here?**

JC: Frogs and rabbits are supposed to taste like chicken. Humans are supposed to taste like pork. But we don't. We taste like Oreos. The church originally used Oreos for communion, but had to switch to the bland wafers you're used to as a cost saving measure after dealing with the onslaught of civil litigation re overzealous priests.

**Rhys Mathewson (in 'Hombre Lobo' at the Pleasance Courtyard): Hi Jesus. How do you feel about disco also dying and then coming back?**

JC: Disco's back? Has anyone told Disco Stu? I'm not too fussed either way, I'm more of a metal fan.

**Ria Lina (in 'School Of Riason' at Gilded Balloon): Do you feel the whole prophet thing is maybe just an overreaction to never knowing your dad?**

JC: No, carpentry was no longer providing a stable income (offshore manufacturing) and the prophet industry was booming at the time, so I made the switch and never looked back.

**John Robertson (in 'The Dark Room' at Underbelly Cowgate and 'A Nifty History' at The Stand): Why is there suffering? And in the case of masochists, why isn't there more?**

JC: Without suffering, Buddha would never have laid out the Four Noble Truths (basically, that shit happens) and we never would have got Buddhism (my favourite religion). As for the masochists, might I suggest attaching yourself to a crucifix and inviting an audience to heckle you for an hour.

**Abigoliah Schamaun (in 'It's Pronounced Abigoliah Schamaun' at Gilded Balloon): I know he betrayed you, but the Judas kiss; was it hot?**

JC: Ahh, the real Passion Of The Christ, way before Brokeback Mountain. (Yes).

**Baba Brinkman (in 'The Rap Guide To Religion' at Gilded Balloon and 'The Canterbury Tales Remixed' at Underbelly Bristo Square): I saw a magician turn water into wine at the Fringe, can you reveal the trick?**

JC: There are two common techniques. The first is a Derren Brown (God) style technique where you hypnotise the entire audience and simply replace the water with wine while they're all under. Personally, I'm not clever enough for that and can't really be bothered. The second technique is more to my liking; a £5.99 DIY kit from Aha Ha Ha

Jokes & Novelties shop just off Grassmarket, simple and cost effective.

**Marcel Lucont (in 'Marcel Lucont Is' at the Pleasance Dome): Jesus, if on a dinner date with a Christian woman, is ordering the 'spare ribs' tantamount to cannibalism?**

JC: Yes. Not that that's always a bad thing. "And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat." - Leviticus 26:29. If it's a first date you're best off playing it safe and ordering the sacrificial lamb.

**Lou Sanders (in 'In Another Great Show Again' at City Cafe): Why do dogs sniff each other's butt holes and are you my real dad?**

JC: That's two questions Lou, though they do seem related. There are many mysteries contained within the confines of a dog's butt hole and no.

**Alfie Moore (in 'The Naked Stun' at Assembly George Square): Hey Jesus, just trying to split the bill for the Last Supper. Can you remember if Peter had the cheesecake?**

JC: Did you ask Peter? He'll probably deny it the first three times you ask him, so just be sure to ask him a fourth time.

**Dr Professor Neal Portenza (in 'Performs His Own Autopsy Live On Stage...' at Just the Tonic at The Mash House): Hello Mr. Jesus, my left foot itches.**

JC: Hi Neal, that's not really a question. Have you tried Canesten? It's about £4.99 from Boots.

Come Heckle Christ is on at the Pleasance Courtyard until 24 Aug.

## Reviewing the \*\*\*\*ing Fringe

### TW REVIEWS

#### ThreeWeeks Podcast Editor Tom Bragg checks out the shows with censored titles

Having set myself the remit of reviewing only shows with an asterisk in their title, I then started to fear that these might be almost exclusively low-grade comedy shows, inserting a swear in the name to grab attention away from the mediocre material within. But, of course, at the Edinburgh Fringe anyone can swear. Star ratings ranged from one to five in this selection of shows, and the types of performance was varied too - from straight stand-up to conceptual comedy, to slide show storytelling, to complete farce.

The disappointment was that more boundaries weren't broken. Surely, if you're going to break language rules in the title of the show, you're expected to break some rules on stage, no? The only show to break any rules was Richard Tyrone Jones's 'What The F\*ck Is This?', where language was cast out the window in favour of animated hand waving and repetition of the five words of the title, in varying order.

The Fringe Society guidelines decree: "f\*ck and c\*nt will be represented as such by replacing the key characters of the word with \* symbols." The programmers feel "this is reflective of the general offence caused by these words". But I couldn't see the same rule for words like b\*ll\*cks, sh\*t or c\*ck. So are shows using these words in their titles deliberately including asterisks to make themselves sound more edgy? Does it pull the crowds in? Well, four of the six shows were on the Free Fringe and all of them pulled in full or near-full houses while the other two on the paid Fringe were also very popular. Perhaps it is a cheap trick for getting b\*ms on s\*ats.

To f\*ck or not to f\*ck? Well, all in all they were a mixed bunch. But my advice, as so often at the Fringe, is to ignore the f\*cking stars and go judge for yourself.

#### Richard Tyrone Jones: What the F\*ck is This? (@rtjpoet / 'Utter!' / PBH's Free Fringe)

Conceptual comedy where the performer said nothing but "what the fuck is this?" for an hour. It had everything - comedy, tragedy; pathos, logos, ethos; a sprinkling of postmodernism. It brought to animated life how much can be communicated with just five words when the deceit of interpretation is broken down to its theory-laden fundamental components through a pre-structuralist approach to

socio-linguistics. And, once you buy into the concept of a five-word show, it's a lot of fun. It was striking how much physical contact there was through the performance but it emphasised that discarding language (and associated differences such as race) and relying on normal human curiosity paradoxically brings people closer together.

Banshee Labyrinth, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 5/5 | [Tom Bragg]

#### Testiculating (Waving Your Arms Talking B\*ll\*cks) (Eric Lampaert / Free Festival)

A slightly noxious mix of jokes about Nazis and racism, coupled with a manic belief in his own ideas: Eric Lambert started upbeat, and the first few Nazi jokes came off, but as he wearied through the set the punchlines began to land on the wrong side of edgy and by the time he sang his exit number (accompanied by imaginary piano) about hating all people as well as people of other races, the joke was more worn than the blistered hands of a mass grave digger. The one plus was his physicality, which he used to hilarious effect but all too rarely. His testiculation flowed for a bit, but the scrotum of a friendly atmosphere soon contracted, shrinking his bollocks back into himself.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 23 Aug.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Tom Bragg]

#### Foul Play. The F\*cking Nasty Show (Brett Vincent for Get Comedy, TheProducersUK and Pleasance Theatre Trust)

Another late night comedy gig trying out an original format, this time promising acts the chance to deliver their nastiest material. However, with sets lasting just seven minutes, the comics couldn't interact with the audience and just delivered standard stuff, mocking their family or telling mildly edgy jokes. The compère, Paul Chowdhry, had time to lay into the crowd but he just picked on two guys in the front row ad nauseam. To top it off, Come Heckle Jesus - a man dressed as Jesus responding to heckles - was on last. He's probably the most non-nasty comic at the Festival, which would have been ironic if the rest of the show had fit into the format in any way at all. NB: The comedians were funny. Just not F\*cking Nasty.

Pleasance Dome, until 23 Aug.  
tw rating 1/5 | [Tom Bragg]

#### Susan Murray's F\*ckwit Club (Susan Murray / PBH's Free Fringe)

Murray has done some seriously stupid things in her life and is now part of a club that meets on Sundays to compare the week's fuckwittiness. Some of it we possibly got to see... she left the stage on the wrong side, meaning she wasn't at the door with

a bucket when the full house exited her free show, plus her stage manager clearly hadn't screwed the light fitting in properly, so it crashed onto the stage five minutes before the end. But Murray had some good material, and fuckwittiness a fun theme, though she tends to fill the gaps between sections with comments like "so that was good", which immediately flatten the mood. Join the club if you're so inclined.

The Liquid Room, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Tom Bragg]

#### The Importance of Being Earnest As Performed By Three F\*cking Queens And A Duck (Out Cast Theatre)

A brilliant farce tracing the antics of four intrepid actors (one being a wooden bird) through rehearsal, the inevitable cast member love affair, the jealousy, the rivalry and the thrill of the first performance. The hour flew past, unlike the wooden duck, which made only a short aerial voyage in a moment of shocked alarm during their half-maniac performance of the butchered Wilde classic. An enjoyable show that could only have been improved by a little more time spent on that actual finale performance. The build-up was magisterial and soaked in lines that tumesced outrageous expectation, but the fun of a farce is when the whole thing crescendos



Photo: Rich Dyson

towards the end - in this one the crescendo was, disappointingly, a bit short-lived.

theSpace on North Bridge, until 23 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Tom Bragg]

#### Pretending Things Are a C\*ck (2hoots Productions / Free Festival)

The premise of this show is funny: a guy travels around the world for years, taking photos of things in positions that make them look like his cock. But that's pretty much the only joke of the hour-long set. Long

periods are spent looking at a slide-show of the thousands of pictures he's taken, some of which are momentarily funny, but the tedium of repetition left this reviewer's eyelids heavy. Jon Bennett tried to spice things up by telling stories about some of the pictures, but ended up just taking the audience through long-winded and dull narratives about travelling - and how weird his family are - that had no real punchlines. Sadly, this show was half-cocked.

Laughing Horse @ City Cafe, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 1/5 | [Tom Bragg]

TW

# GARY COLMAN

# CHUNT\*

(\*the verb to grumble)

"Laugh out loud funny"

The Scotsman

★ ★ ★ ★ Three Weeks

★ ★ ★ ★ Broadway Baby

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## Jason Hewitt: Cleverly crafting claustrophobia



Photo: Rich Dyson

and more challenging for the audience to watch.

**TW: The two characters are very strong. How fully formed were they when you set about writing the piece, or did you have the premise and the characters emerged as you wrote?**

JH: The characters emerged as the script was written and then further developed. I've written many different versions of the play and with each one the characters have developed more. Their lives are now a lot more complex, and they both bring into the lift their own emotional baggage. We only ever get to hear snippets of their stories though, and it is left to the audience to piece the puzzle together.

**TW: You've written fiction as well as theatre. Though you started out working behind the scenes in publishing, how did you make the move to author?**

JH: I actually started as a bookseller and then moved into publishing, so I've always been obsessed with books, and I've been writing stories since I was a child. Then, in my early thirties, I realised that I was getting stuck in a rut and made the rash decision to throw in my career in to complete an MA in Creative Writing. It took four years to write the novel I started on the course and I managed to get a literary agent for it but, in the end, we couldn't sell it. My agent's response to this was simply: 'Well, write another then'. That's what I did and another four years on 'The Dynamite Room' has just been published. If I've learnt one thing in life it's that if you want something bad enough you have to be persistent.

**TW: How does writing for the stage compare to writing for the page?**

JH: Obviously when you're writing a novel you have a lot more scope for more complex narratives and layers. There's also the luxury of being able to write description, paint the locations and tell the reader exactly what your characters are thinking. You've also got more control. I can

### TW INTERVIEW

**2014 has been a big year for Jason Hewitt, with his debut novel just published, and now his first full-length play on the stage. The latter is 'Claustrophobia', a tightly staged drama focused on two strangers trapped in a lift.**

**Having enjoyed the show very much, we spoke to Hewitt about the play, his debuts on page and stage, and why sometimes a good playwright should leave some words out.**

**TW: Tell us the premise of 'Claustrophobia'.**

JH: 'Claustrophobia' is a psychological drama about a man and a woman trapped in a lift. On the surface the set-up is pretty simple, but it is also a drama about entrapment, self-imprisonment and control.

**TW: Where did the basic idea of the play come from?**

JH: It originally came from a short film script that To The Moon's Artistic Director Sharon Burrell had written many years ago. The original idea was a very simple one about two strangers in a lift. But from there it's been developed over many rewrites into something a lot more psychological



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# merry christmas, Ms Meadows

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# phobia

move them about the room exactly as I want. With a script all you are really providing is the dialogue and story. It's down to the actors and the director as to how the characters move, what they think and how they show that. As a playwright, the biggest challenge I think is relinquishing control. You are much more aware when writing for the stage that you are working as part of a team and you have to trust that everyone else involved has the same vision as you.

**TW: 'Claustrophobia' is your first full length play. How have you found that experience of seeing your work transformed on stage by the rest of your team?**

JH: Both terrifying and exhilarating. We have two brilliant actors in 'Claustrophobia' and both have reduced me to tears during rehearsals with the power with which they have brought to life some of the words I have written. It's a thrill to watch. There is also the natural fear, of course, as to how the play will be received, but at this stage in the game there's nothing we can do about that. We just have to enjoy the ride and be proud of what we've achieved.

**TW: How did you hook up with To The Moon? How has the collaboration worked?**

JH: Sharon Burrell, the Artistic Director of To the Moon, was an assistant director on three plays I performed in as an actor. Then she came to see a short play I co-wrote a few years ago. The rest, as they say, is history.

**TW: Do you think that having been an actor helps when writing a play?**

JH: I think so. The script is very tight but within that I've left plenty of space where the actors can do their own thing. For example, there are sections in the script where I've simply stated that there is a passing of time. It's been up to the actors, director and our movement director to improvise how they show this on stage. If I'd not been an actor as well I think I might have fallen into the trap of cramming in more words when you should trust that the actors don't always need dialogue to tell a story.

**TW: Have you been involved in a production at the Edinburgh Fringe before? How are you finding it?**

JH: This is my first Edinburgh Fringe experience so to be here with a debut play and a debut novel is extremely exciting. I'm loving it. There's so much amazing talent crammed in to the city and the atmosphere is electric. Twenty-five days simply isn't going to be long enough to see everything I want to. Needless to say, I'll be back for more next year!

'Claustrophobia' is on at Zoo until 25 Aug.

## TW REVIEWS

### Paradise Lost (Paul Van Dyke)

With this one man production of 'Paradise Lost' involving puppets and rudimentary CGI, Paul Van Dyke tackles John Milton's epic poem - about Satan travelling to the Garden of Eden - with gusto, carving out an easily digestible hour-long show. Yet despite a charismatic and flawless rendition of the material from performer and puppeteer Van Dyke, who should be commended for his performance, the show lacked any real imagination when interpreting the source material. Ultimately, the simple set-up and lacklustre effects (the show boasts "groundbreaking special effects" and this is simply not the case) just don't do justice to the complexity of the original. This show is best suited to newcomers to the piece, who would benefit from a simplistic adaptation.

Gryphon@WestEnd, until 16 Aug.  
tw rating 3/5 | [James McColl]

### Pomegranate Jam (CalArts Festival Theater)

This is a short piece depicting the story of Persephone from Greek mythology, the daughter of Demeter who marries the god of the underworld, dividing her time equally between her mother's domain and her husband's, bringing about the changing of the seasons. This show tells the classic story simply, sweetly and with beautiful use of colour; billed as a 'shadow ballet', it effectively mixes dancing silhouettes with intricate shadow puppetry. The music is emotive, despite remaining very similar throughout the different parts of the dramatic story, and the shadow puppetry is slightly lacking in precision, yet overall 'Pomegranate Jam' is a short, sweet and stylised piece of physical theatre.

Venue 13, until 23 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Vicki Baron]

### First Class (Aulos Productions and Relief Theatre / Free Festival)

Epiphanies and train journeys collide in 'First Class', as three characters in three different time periods find ways to cope with the pressures of their lives. The script is very fast paced in places, with actors finishing each others sentences, and they switch characters at such a rate that the action can be hard to follow at times and so some important plot points get lost in the jumble of information. The show occasionally veers into melodrama, and some slightly hammed-up performances only emphasise this. Still, once the pace levels out and the show finds its footing, 'First Class' proves to be a solid production, with only a few delays in getting to its final destination.

Laughing Horse @ Espionage, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Patricia-Ann Young]

### Silk Road (EH Productions)

'Silk Road' is the tale of a friendly, up-and-coming drug-lord, who lives with his nan and is hopelessly in love with

a girl above his station. In an attempt to win over his uninterested lover, he revolutionises the grimy Northern drug world using the infamous Silk Road website, where drugs and other illegal goods could be bought anonymously over the Internet. Like a hybrid of 'Snatch' and 'Starter for Ten', this is both an adolescent adventure and a grotesque, criminal caper. Gritty and very well written by Old Vic New Voices playwright Alex Oates, 'Silk Road' is the best thing to come from its namesake. Unless you're into guns and drugs. Then it's just one of the best things.

Assembly George Square Studios, until 25 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [George Robb]

### So What If I Dance? (Dragon Literature)

Most of us probably think we know the deal when it comes to strip clubs (even if we've never set foot inside one), which is why this frank, unapologetic monologue stands out as a mesmerising piece of theatre. This supremely confident solo performance by actress Chipo Kureya tells a dancer's side of the story, relaying comic statistics about the industry and voicing her anger at public preconceptions. As she's winding her body around a chair within inches of us, asking audience members if they've ever watched porn, it's a confrontational experience. But of course, that's the whole point: here's an intelligent, informed and powerful woman, who sees what she does as just another job and challenges us to judge her otherwise. Unforgettable stuff.

Sweet Grassmarket, until 17 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Laura Gavin]

### Zelda - The Last Flapper by William Luce (The Women's Theatre Association IF)

This play, which sees Zelda Fitzgerald in a psychiatric hospital, recalling her life and marriage to F Scott Fitzgerald, is performed with the simplest of sets - a gauze curtain, the desk and chair of a doctor's office, a few blocks - but through imaginative direction and a very physical performance, each set piece effectively demonstrated a different element of the characters' pasts. The show was subtitled, with a beautiful translation from Romanian to English, but unfortunately this ultimately jarred, because it was sometimes evident that the words on screen did not really match those of the performer. A very competently and memorably executed piece of theatre, but difficult to watch on a practical level.

Hill Street Solo Theatre, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Vicki Baron]

### Enigma - Emmy Goering (Hitler's Diva) (Modernes Theater Wien mit Karin Pettenburger)

Telling the disturbing and distorted story of Emmy Goering, wife of the infamous Hermann, this one-woman show relied on the charisma of an alarming character to maintain the audience's attention. Unfortunately, this performance was fairly flat; Emmy's moments of ludicity and insanity did

not seem very different from one another, and the impersonations of Hitler and Goering were not directed with any thought to physicality or body language. The concept was interesting, looking at the Nazi regime through a different set of eyes, and the technical performance was accomplished, but it ultimately failed to make an impact. This show had great potential to charm or alarm, but sadly it couldn't seem to make up its mind to do either.

theSpace @ Surgeons Hall, until 9 Aug.  
tw rating 2/5 | [Vicki Baron]

### Little On The Inside (Clean Break)

Two women who meet in prison form a strong love and bond that helps them transcend the drudgery and loneliness of their lives in Clean Break's 'Little On The Inside'. The script is beautifully, poetically rhythmic, invoking such strong imagery that you almost forget the complete lack of any set or props. The two actors put in powerful performances, with Sandra Reid bringing a constantly engaging presence to her role. Estella Daniels puts in an incredibly dynamic and versatile performance, easily switching from docile to threatening, happy to heartbroken in a matter of seconds. In a show that's brimming with talent, simplicity and story are all that are needed to engage and move an audience.

Summerhall, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating: 4/5 | [Patricia-Ann Young]

TW

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# THEATRE

NEWS & UPDATES VIA TWITTER @ThreeWeeks  
REVIEW ALERTS VIA TWITTER @TWittique

## TW REVIEWS

### Simply the West (Cosmic Biscuit Theatre)

A humorously told tragic tale, Cosmic Biscuit's 'Simply the West' is an amusing, well performed production. Three physical theatre graduates from St.Mary's University make up the majority of this ensemble, and their chemistry and kinship is effective and evident onstage. Using puppetry and clowning, they enact the story of a girl attempting to cross the Berlin Wall, and introduce the various characters she encounters along the way. The production is intimate, and full of laughter and charm; the actors make eye contact and speak to the audience directly. I would love to see the production developed more fully with a longer, more complex storyline, as the ending felt far too abrupt. A charismatic company that I would like to see more from in the future.

The Space @ Jury's inn until 23 Aug.  
tw rating 3/5 [Keara Barnes]

### TW RATINGS

- 1/5 BAD
- 2/5 MEDIOCRE
- 3/5 GOOD
- 4/5 RECOMMENDED
- 5/5 HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

### My Name Is Saoirse (Sunday's Child)

If you are looking for a humorous and heart-warming small scale production this festival, you've found it. 'My name is Saoirse' centres on a young girl growing up in County Limerick. Beginning with childhood and easing into her adolescence, the piece is beautifully written, striking a mesmerising balance between touching and funny moments. The talented Eva O'Connor plays the part to perfection, convincingly portraying a young girl in the midst of a difficult transition; by making constant eye contact with the audience she reinforces the narrative, deepening the connection between actor and spectator. The various impersonations of family and friends throughout the piece adds just the right amount of theatricality to an otherwise sombre story. A captivating performance.

Scottish Storytelling Centre, until 19 Aug.  
tw rating 5/5 [Keara Barnes]

### Somebody I Used To Know (Everything I Own)

This show involves spending twenty minutes in a shipping container with just one performer. If you think this would be an intimidating experience, think again. The space is dressed with familiar and nostalgic teenage clutter, and on entry you are offered your choice of variety of sweets. The protagonist's story is one that we can all relate to: the minor

tragedy of trying to maintain dearly-held friendships solely via social media. The piece is an insightful, poignant and emotionally involving experience. Gently encouraging us to question how we interact over long periods of time and across great distances, this is a simple but significant experience that is not to be missed.

Assembly Roxy, until 25 Aug.  
tw rating 5/5 [Wicki Baron]

### The Noctambulist (Raving Mask Theatre)

Taking on the popular topic of wasters and layabouts, 'The Noctambulist' depicts unsympathetic character Albert, a sleepwalker. He's trying to turn his life around through his new alter-ego - The Noctambulist - much to the dismay of his two flat mates. With the set-up of a mediocre sitcom, 'The Noctambulist' is a fairly contrived, unexplained and under-explored production that ultimately falls flat. It's a disappointing show that's unable to connect with its subject matter on any real level, instead opting for clichés and never quite finding its feet. It's devoid of emotional depth, despite having a strong cast that would seem capable of giving it some. The cast is unable to flesh out the two-dimensional characters that seem ill-suited for this piece.

Paradise In The Vault, until 17 Aug.  
tw rating 2/5 [James McCall]



Photo: Aenne Pallasca

### The Duck Pond (withWings Theatre Company)

'The Duck Pond' may sound like a cut price version of 'Swan Lake' - indeed, the performers acknowledge this by making several jokes about not paying royalties - yet it is anything but. This production is a clever, playful retelling of the 'Swan Lake' story, which uses dance, physical theatre and intelligent comedy to convey the well known tale of love and tragedy. This is an immaculate piece; the only thing I can think of to compare it to is the perfect circus show. Not a toe is out of place, the timing is perfect, the audience participation is well considered, the acting is superb and, above all, despite the humour, it is still moving. In my opinion, flawless.

Bedlam Theatre, until 24 Aug. tw rating 5/5 [Charlotte Taylor]

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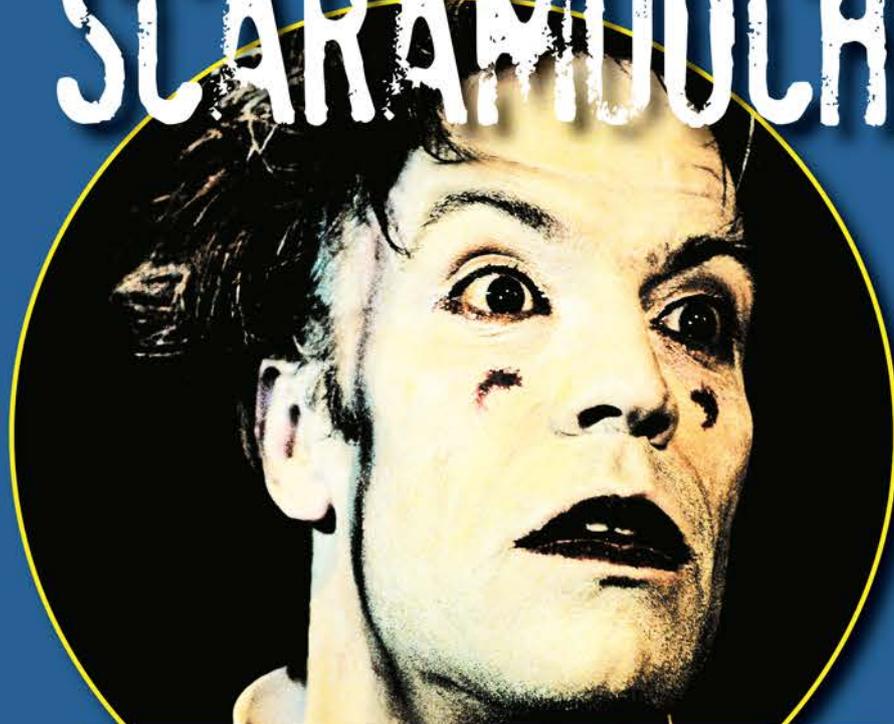
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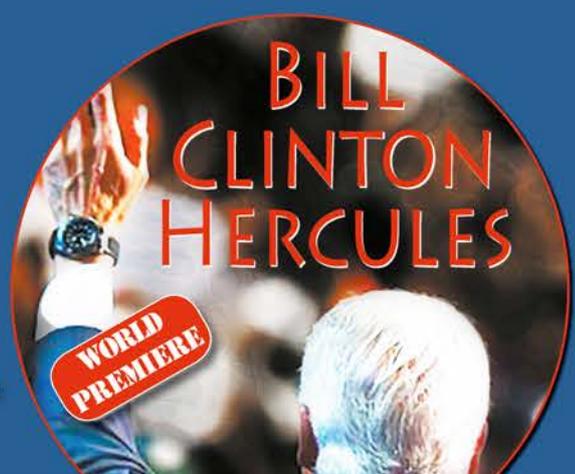


## IN THE WINDOW

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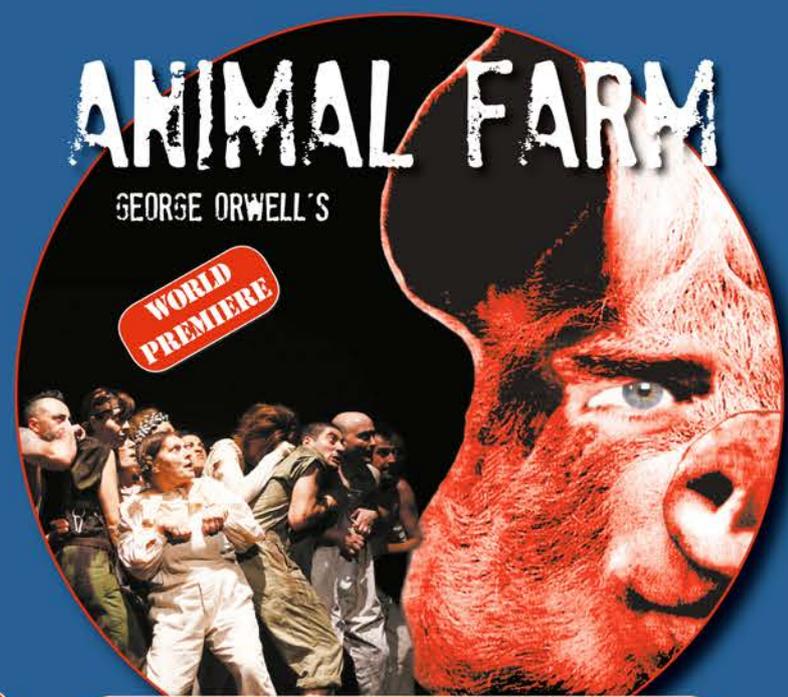
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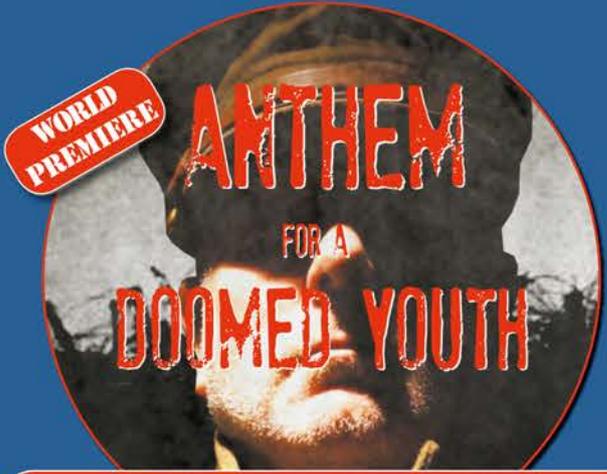
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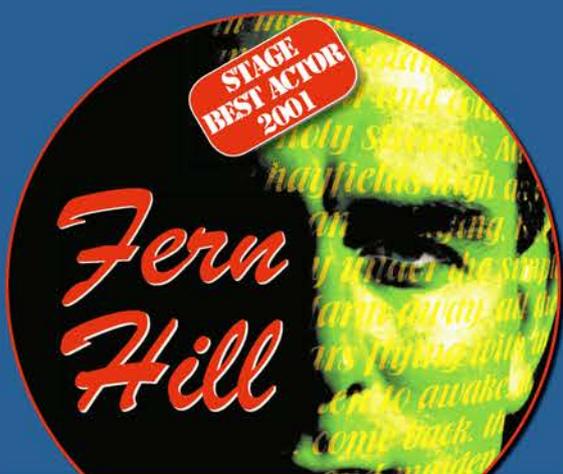
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## A Question For Three: Fascinating Aida

What do you wish you'd known before you started coming to the Edinburgh Festival?

**Liza Pulman:** if I'd known just how often I would be coming back to the Festival I would have bagged myself a venue of my own and pocketed 100% of the profits. Fekk!!

**Dillie Keane:** I wish someone had bloody told me I'd still be coming to the Festival 41 years later. I'd have invested in property! I'd own a whole street in the New Town by now!

**Adele Anderson:** I wish someone had told me that what happens in Edinburgh should stay in Edinburgh. Yes, you've both had a wonderful time in a magical place but, at the end of the Festival, kiss them goodbye at Waverley Station and board the train with ne'er a backward glance. Next year you can do the whole thing again with somebody new.

'Fascinating Aida: Charm Offensive' is on at Underbelly Bristo Square until 25 Aug.



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## TW REVIEWS

### Picnic In The Cemetery (Point View Art Association Presents Made In Macao)

This cutting edge performance has come from Macao and is well worth experiencing if you enjoy the avant garde. It combined props, physical theatre, film and music in a set that felt like a front room where audience and cast all hung out together. Sometimes the cast silently wandered around unsettlingly, or watched with us, blurring the line between performer and audience. Most interesting of all was that the music was acoustic, not electronic or computer generated: piano, violin and cello were all very well played. There was a lot to see and discover, some of it puzzling, and there was no spoken dialogue. 'Picnic In The Cemetery' is touching, endearing and witty, and this is what made its strangeness feel non-threatening.

C Nova, until 25 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Louise Rodgers]

### Metropolitan Cathedral Choral And Organ Vespers (St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral / Cantors Of The Holy Rood)

Even if you love this beautiful evening prayer service don't clap - it's not a concert - but if you enjoy plainchant and polyphony then this is for you. This was well sung, dynamic plainchant in its proper context; the lead cantor shaped and shepherded the music, constantly moving it along to fulfil its function of communicating the Latin words. A second choir sang Renaissance polyphony in the organ gallery above, providing passages of contrast, bringing a little flourish of Venice to Edinburgh, and showcasing the cathedral's own singers. The service of Vespers ended with an accomplished Duruflé organ solo. I enjoyed hearing all of this lovely music in its natural habitat, not chained up in a concert hall.

St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, 16 and 23 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Louise Rodgers]

## 5/5 SHOW

### Fusion Guitar: Classical And Percussive Guitar (Declan Zapala)

It wasn't just flawless technique and superb artistry that make this a five star show - although that helped - it was the way Zapala communicated with his audience. His funny, confiding anecdotes as he changed the complex tuning of his guitar made the audience feel they already knew and liked him very much. In addition, he displayed raw emotion through his playing - particularly during 'Philomena', a composition he wrote for his mother. His programme included recent pieces that used the guitar as a percussion instrument and had a whiff of the experimental about them, as well as Bach preludes from the baroque era: all were breathtaking. Go see this man while he's still playing smaller venues, he's brilliant!

C too, until 16 Aug.  
tw rating 5/5 | [Louise Rodgers]



## Tom Blackmore: Peace and freedom in song

### TW INTERVIEW

Edinburgh-born David Maxwell Fyfe was a lawyer and politician in the mid Twentieth Century, perhaps best known for being a prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, and as one of the architects of the European Convention Of Human Rights that followed the atrocities of World War II.

His is a fascinating story, and one all the more interesting to explore, as the human rights he and his collaborators set out to protect in the 1950s are still routinely questioned today. And that story is indeed explored, through poetry, prose and song, in 'Dreams Of Peace And Freedom', a Fringe show conceived by Fyfe's



grandson Tom Blackmore. We spoke to Blackmore to find out more.

**TW: Let's start with the man at the heart of the piece. For the uninitiated, tell us a little more about your grandfather David Maxwell Fyfe?**

TB: He was a successful lawyer and politician, who "with no advantage of wealth, station or influence", as he put it, became Home Secretary and Lord Chancellor. He once wrote of himself "I would describe my role as that of an actor given a small walking-on role in a mighty drama: few people may notice him but he sees a good deal" Though he took centre stage in the 1940s, first as a UK prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crimes trials, and then as a champion of the European Convention of Human Rights.

**TW: So he played an important role in shaping the principles of human rights of today?**

TB: Yes, in that together with a handful of European colleagues he drafted the ECHR, and made sure that it was made law by the then new European Parliamentary Assembly and Council Of Ministers. It was a very simple list of rights and freedoms, upheld and interpreted by an international court. But there was a lot of opposition to it, and there still is. But having studied the evidence of terror, death and murder at Nuremberg, Fyfe was convinced that something needed to be done to make Europe safe.

**TW: Where did the idea come from to create a show around Fyfe's life?**

TB: About fifteen years ago I was contacted by a firm of solicitors in the City of London to say that they had unearthed a number of boxes of my grandfather's papers. These included the letters exchanged between my grandparents when he was at Nuremberg. Although principally love letters, they also told the story of the trial. These inspired various projects using these papers, including this show.

**TW: In addition to Fyfe's letters and speeches, there's a musical element here, choral works based on the poetry of Rupert Brooke and James Logie Robertson. How do those fit into the mix?**

TB: Both poets were important to my grandfather. He admired Brooke's 'War Sonnets' as a schoolboy and cited Brooke's 'The Solider' as he drew his summarising speech at Nuremberg to a close. Brooke's poem reads "Sights and sounds, dreams happy as her day, And laughter learnt of friends, and gentleness, In hearts at peace, under an English heaven". But Fyfe concluded that these aspirations "are not the prerogative of any one country, they are the inalienable heritage of mankind"; he strove to offer all nations Brooke's "English Heaven". 'Non Semper Imbres' by

James Logie Robertson was also an important poem to Fyfe and his wife, Sylvia, during the trials. As he wrote in August 1946: "It rather captures our mood at the moment".

**TW: Tell us about the music. What form does it take, and how was it conceived?**

TB: It is a song cycle of three-part harmony for the female voice accompanied by piano. It is written, and in my view quite brilliantly, by my long-term collaborator Sue Casson, and was inspired by our daughter's years in the Southwark Cathedral Girls choir working with Stephen Disley.

**TW: The European Convention that Fyfe championed so much has come under some new criticism in recent years. How do you think Fyfe would have responded to that?**

TB: I don't think that he would be surprised that international human rights have got under a lot of



peoples skins, that was the point. He would be astonished at some of the resulting freedoms. And appalled at present plans to abandon the still comparatively new apparatus of freedom. The European Court needs constant reform, as do all meaningful institutions, but for the UK to leave it would be a classic case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Read more from Tom at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/tomblackmore](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/tomblackmore)

'Dreams Of Peace And Freedom' is on at C south until 25 Aug.

TW

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## The Girl Who... let her audience lead the adventure

### TW INTERVIEW

Anyone who ever fell into the 'Choose Your Own Adventure' books as a child (or any books where reader decisions move forward the plot) are probably going to want to check out 'The Girl Who', a new musical from Noisemaker Productions. Though be warned, with audience decisions capable of delivering 128 different version of the show, you might be tempted to make a few repeat visits, if only to find out what songs you missed. We spoke to Noisemaker's cofounders Scott Gilmour and Claire McKenzie about what motivated them to create a musical where the audience controls the plotline, and how exactly their 'Choose Your Own Musical' works.

**TW:** So, this is a fun concept for a show. Tell us the basic premise.

**CM:** The show follows the story of

Anna, a young girl who has lost her parents and sets off on a journey to find them. However, the audience decides which way she goes. Every choice Anna comes up against - whether to climb the tree or go down the burrow, to tell the truth or to tell a lie - the audience makes for her, much like the form of a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' book.

**TW:** Where did the idea come from for 'Choose Your Own Adventure' style show?

**SG:** All of our work is designed to play with the form of musical theatre and to challenge what an audience expects from a musical. The idea of placing the structure in the audience's hands was something we'd wanted to try for a while and when the opportunity to collaborate with the Royal Conservatoire Of Scotland and Assembly came up, we thought this would be the perfect testing ground for it.

**TW:** Were you a big fan of the 'Choose Your Own Adventure' books?

**SG:** Yes! Both Claire and I loved them growing up. The idea that your little book had hundreds of stories inside was always pretty cool. And if you went the wrong way, or your guy ended up over a cliff or eaten by a dragon, you could always go back and try a different path. It was a brilliant way of making the reader feel active, involved and part of the story; something we definitely wanted for our audience.



**TW:** Does the line up of songs also vary depending on audience choices, or is it mainly dialogue sequences that change?

**SG:** Everything is affected by the audience's choices. Not just the dialogue and story but what songs we hear, the underscore, costume, lighting, sound. Our cast have learned 25 numbers but will only perform a fraction of these each day. Our eight-piece band have multiple scores; where Anna goes affects which one they play from. Our technical team all have maps to follow so they're ready for whatever section is coming next. This ensures every aspect of the performance is determined by our audience.

**TW:** Is sounds like quite a challenge for the cast, with so many variations.

**CM:** Absolutely. They have a huge amount to retain and respond to with every show. Not just onstage but also offstage, they need to work to keep sections rehearsed and working if they haven't been visited in a while. However, despite this extra level of work, the reward is that they also have no idea what will happen next. So every show, whilst being unique for the audience, is also a completely different dynamic and structure for them; making it easier to keep fresh over a long run.

**TW:** Are there any particular 'routes' through the story that hardly ever happen? Do you have favourite route?

**SG:** Some have definitely been visited more than others but we've been everywhere at least once so far. There's not a favourite overall, but I think depending what mood you're in affects where you'd like to see Anna go. Some days you feel like seeing her captured by pirates on The Forgotten Sea, other days you want her to go to present time at Queen Bella's Palace. Or maybe we just have weird moods...

**TW:** What future plans have you got for 'The Girl Who'?

**CM:** Honestly, 'The Girl Who' was only ever supposed to be an experiment for us. We wanted to see if this type of 'Choose Your Own Adventure' show would work. That said, we've already been approached by a few companies and producers about the possibility of developing it further. Ideally, we'd like to rehearse a version which would rely on a smaller group of actors who we could tour. Beyond that, we have various ideas about how we'd like to develop the 'Girl Who' brand and concept further but, much like the show, you never really know what will happen next.

Read more about 'The Girl Who' at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/thegirlwho](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/thegirlwho)

'The Girl Who' is on at Assembly George Square until 25 Aug.

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**TW:** How does the show work, how many times do the audience 'choose', and how is the choosing done?

**SG:** Anna, and the audience, are led through the show by a Jiminy-Cricket-type-character called The Clown. He presents all of the choices and directs Anna to whatever path or decision we choose. In total there are 128 possible versions of the show, which allows it to be unique to every audience. In each journey there are seven choices all made in different ways; some are games, some are made at the top of the show and only revealed at the end.

**CM:** So for example, if Anna travels to Underfoot - one of the worlds she can visit - she must defeat the Gatekeeper to be allowed in, otherwise she will taken prisoner for trespassing. This is decided by a giant game of noughts and crosses played by an audience member; if they win Anna can enter, if they lose she becomes a prisoner.

**TW:** Presumably some scenes and story-lines don't appear depending on how the choosing goes? Does that mean you had to write two hours of script for a one hour show?

**CM:** Absolutely. Whichever path the audience chooses dictates what material they see. In every show certain characters, worlds and plots will be left unvisited. Over the hour you will see about a third of the total script and score.

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## Curtis Uhlemann: Together through conflict

### TW INTERVIEW

**A young musician searches through his late grandmother's trunk and discovers mementoes of her life, which together tell the story of two people, from different sides of an ocean, brought together through the turmoil of World War II.**

**That world is recreated through video, sound and dance in 'The Warriors: A Love Story', a show inspired by a real-life relationship, conceived by American group ARCOS Dance and presented at the Fringe this month by Ines Wurth. We spoke to ARCOS's Artistic Director Curtis Uhlemann about that true story, how it inspired his show, and how it's now being retold on stage.**

**TW: Tell us about the premise of 'The Warriors'.**

CU: 'The Warriors' is inspired by the idea of the legacies our grandparents leave us and what we choose to do with them. The show is based on the actual international marriage of a German dancer and American philosopher after World War II, two people who transformed their horrific experiences in the war - the bombing of Dresden, the inhumanities that come with seeking out and killing 'the enemy' - into a lifelong commitment to acts of love and beauty.



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**TW: The story is inspired by your multimedia director Eliot Gray Fisher's real life grandparents. What influence did their lives have on the piece?**

CU: The recorded voices of Ursula and J Glenn Gray, taken from interviews in the early 70s, are played in the production. And Glenn's book 'The Warriors: Reflections On Men In Battle' provided thematic and narrative inspiration. Plus even a few of the set pieces are objects that actually belonged to the couple. As far as the form goes, we experimented with post-modern and contemporary dance styles, trying to create movement that honours the era in which Ursula danced in Dresden - with German pioneers Mary Wigman and Gret Palucca - as well as our own. Their artistic influence and spirit of innovation in the past is present in our own choreography.

**TW: Your show is set in a world in conflict, and a city surrounded by destruction. But, as the title tells us, this is a love story. Is there a message in that juxtaposition?**

CU: In the show, Ursula is heard using a German phrase "über leben" in reference to "living through" the bombing of Dresden, but goes on to say that it felt more like "dying" through it. The show explores how such profoundly destructive experiences make the elements of material life less important for survivors. The parts of our life such as love and companionship become more important for them, as we see in Glenn and Ursula's life. It's really not the kind of 'love story' one would think about when you hear that phrase: it's actually about people learning about a deeper love and deciding to live it and teach it in their lives. And perhaps the people they touched with this understanding led different lives for it and passed it along to everyone they knew. This production is an extension of that legacy.

**footage is used in this production?**

CU: There is a wide variety of audio-visual material from the past century incorporated into the piece: rotoscoped versions of Eadweard Muybridge's 1890s studies of human and animal movement, in a stylised animation depicting the Dresden bombing; actual war propaganda from multiple countries; audio and film footage from a BBC interview in the 70s with Glenn and Ursula; home movie video from the 80s; contemporary news reports; and time-lapses shot during a recent trip to Germany. There are also sequences involving filmed dancers and actors that interact with the live performers onstage in various ways.

**TW: With the choreography, music, and multimedia all seemingly equally important in the piece, what is your creative process like? Which ones come first, and how does each element develop with the other?**

CU: With this production in particular, we decided to create the show in a bit of a different way than we're used to doing. Because the story was inspired by real lives, and we had so many documentary, archival, and found footage sources, we started by developing the video and audio pieces and real-life inspired scenes first and created the choreography around them. We also considered all the transitional moments as though they are their own pieces or ideas. That's something that we also think sets us apart from others: the work we do in seamless transitions between what might normally be distinct scenes with beginning and endings. We like to blend and overlap the moments just as we do the different media, looking at the entire show as a series of choreographed moments.

Read more from Curtis at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/curtisuhlemann](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/curtisuhlemann)

'The Warriors: A Love Story' is on at Zoo Southside until 24 Aug.

**TW: The multi-media content is a key element in your work. What kind of**

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## Lucy Ayrton: Splitting mermaids at the Fringe

### TW INTERVIEW

**After winning much acclaim with her 2012 show 'Lullabies To Make Your Children Cry', Lucy Ayrton returns to the Fringe with a modern day reworking of 'The Little Mermaid' that explores issues around child bearing and reproduction.**

**TW: Tell us about the premise of 'The Splitting Of The Mermaid'.**

LA: "May the Mermaid wants a baby, but mermaids don't have wombs. Should she sacrifice her voice, her body and her culture for a chance at a child of her own?" The piece updates the original 'Little Mermaid' myth to modern day Hull. I keep the darkness of the story but update some of the patriarchal assumptions.

**TW: You tackle contemporary issues through your retelling of the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tale. Which issues are they?**

LA: I'm aiming to explore issues around childbearing and reproductive choice. It seems that while we will talk openly about marriage and settling down with partners - "How did you know he was the one? How can you tell it's the right time?" - we don't have these kind of open conversations about the decision to have a baby.

between two worlds, not fully of either, but unable to leave the other behind. The idea of wanting to change your body is also something I can really relate to. And I'm really interested in the ways fairy tales evolve over time. Disney's 'Little Mermaid' has an opposite ending, and therefore conclusion, to the original story. There is no "Happily Ever After" in the Hans Christian Andersen version. We think of this as making it less suitable for children, but what this story is doing is posing a question - "is it a good idea to give up your voice, change your body, and leave your culture behind, because you saw a hot boy on the beach?" I prefer the answer the original gives.

**TW: It seems that the exploration of feminist issues across the Fringe's programme - comedy, theatre and spoken word - has become a lot more common in last couple of years. Do you agree? Why do you think that is?**

LA: I think it's true that there has been an increase in feminist shows at the Fringe in the last few years, though I'm surprised that there aren't more. There are still probably three productions of 'Hamlet' to each overtly feminist Fringe show. But the increase there has been is probably linked to a more general increase in feminist discussion in wider society, partly driven by grass roots projects like Laura Bates' excellent Everyday Sexism, and also the success of people like Caitlin

**TW: You mentioned a wider increase in feminist discussion in recent years. Do you feel work like yours is part of a wider movement? And does that make you optimistic, despite that flood of misogyny and anti-feminism you still see online every day?**

LA: I like to think so! And it does seem like feminism is becoming more mainstream again, after a real dip five years ago. The misogyny I see on social media makes me very sad though. I feel that today's 18 year old women have more to face than I did

ten years ago, and that's not the way it should be. They should have it better than me. When I left home, my Mum didn't tell me not to go out drinking late, she taught me how to stand up for myself instead. Now, we seem less okay with letting our young women be angry. We want them to shut up and take the blame.

**TW: You're listed in the 'spoken word' section of the Festival, though the show sounds a little theatrical. How would you describe the nature of the show?**

LA: The show sits in a place between theatre, storytelling and poetry. It's a one-woman show, so I play all the parts - two mermaid construction workers, a fisherman, a mechanic and a witch - and also narrate. It has the energy of a theatre show, but keeps the intimacy of spoken word.

Read more from Lucy at [ThreeWeeks.co.uk/lucyayrton](http://ThreeWeeks.co.uk/lucyayrton)

'Lucy Ayrton: The Splitting Of The Mermaid' is on at Underbelly Cowgate until 24 Aug.



Instead we're presented with two choices: being "really into her career" or "a mother and VERY HAPPY ABOUT IT", never complaining or questioning. Childbearing is still not presented as a free choice, it's shown as something that happens to you.

**TW: Why build the show around 'The Little Mermaid'?**

LA: I've always been drawn to mermaids - they're such a perfect metaphor for not fitting in. Caught

Moran. But I think there would be more feminist shows if the backlash to that trend wasn't so strong. Not just the more obvious anti-feminist stuff on the internet, but day-to-day. Yesterday a woman told my producer that feminists were bad people, and he should set himself on fire. If that wasn't the sort of response you get when flying someone for a teatime storytelling show, there'd be much more discussion of politics of all types at the Fringe.

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## Adventures at the children's Fringe



Since having a child, I have been forced, by law, to review only children's shows. I occasionally slip up and accidentally go out and view some comedy or theatre, but please don't tell the Fringe media police or I'm for it. So, the moment my daughter Cecily and I arrived in Edinburgh a few days ago, we began an exhausting schedule of kid-show-going. Well, it's exhausting for me. I'm the one who has to remember to sort out the tickets.

By the time you read this, we will have seen a whole lot more, and will probably have gone much further afield, to venues far and wide. You'll be able to read about those in our Daily email. But for the moment, this is what we have seen, and would recommend, at the time of going to press.

### Dean Friedman's Smarty Pants (DBS Productions and Dean Friedman)

Familiar Fringe face Dean Friedman has in recent years added musical shows for kids to his Festival repertoire, and the result is very successful. 'Smarty Pants' has the simplest of plots in a setting familiar to small ones: a little girl has her first day at school and discovers that telling the other children that she knows loads about everything isn't the way to win friends and influence people. It's very much aimed at the children - this isn't really the kind of show that delights in sophisticated asides to the adults - but it nonetheless manages to engage everyone with some very catchy songs, and through the winning performances of a highly energetic cast who never drop the pace for a moment.

Sweet Grassmarket, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Caro Moses]

### Jay Foreman's Disgusting Songs For Revolting Children (And Other Funny Stories) (Ditto Productions)

Some of Jay Foreman's songs really are truly disgusting and

unpleasant, but, you know, if you know anything about kids, or even have one, you'll know that they relish any mention of poo, wee, death or dismemberment by the time they are seven. Or is that just mine...? In any case, the comedian does a great job of entertaining his crowd, keeping the rowdier ones in line with a succession of fierce looks, offering songs and poetry that perhaps skirt a little closer to the bone than some parents might be comfortable with; yet, my fellow child-wrangers laughed happily, probably even louder than their enthralled kids. My daughter chortled delightedly throughout, and has already treated me to many a sketchy reprise.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Caro Moses]

### Sid's Show (Oscar Stardust Ltd)

If you've weaned your child on Cbeebies in the last decade or so, you won't have failed to come across the channel's longest serving presenter. His touring show very much reflects his recent career, not least because the show features the very catchy 'number raps' music, and is peppered throughout with references to Sid's Cbeebies friends. It's very much a show for that demographic, clearly designed to appeal to the 6-and-unders, and it very capably achieves its aim. Sloane's energy is infectious and apparently pretty much boundless, as he leads the audience on a fantastical journey in search of a missing pair of socks. As Sid left the stage, one of the children in the crowd shouted "I love you"; I think that accurately reflected the general feeling of affection in the room.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 25 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Caro Moses]

### The Tale Of The Dastardly Defrost (As Told By)

I struggled initially with the concept of this show, the story of an assorted shelf's worth of fridge-stored foodstuffs threatened with extinction via the medium of an unexpected defrost. I found myself wondering just how long these characters were destined to live in any case... surely digestion would be imminent...? But I am not a child, and perhaps children don't overthink these things; this pint sized audience certainly seemed engaged by

the company's committed and sprightly performances, giving their full attention, for the most part, to a hysterical can of whip cream, a very French bottle of champagne, a grumpy old Stilton and the romance being played out between chocolate and cheese. Not one for toddlers, this, but it should easily entertain your minus-9s.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 3/5 | [Caro Moses]

### Arabian Nights (Story Pocket Theatre)

This is a brilliant play for children of any age, and for their parents too. From the beginning the room was mesmerised by a cast of three highly talented actors who shifted ably from role to role, drawing us in with equal helpings of high drama and belly-laugh inducing comedy. The Story of Scheherazade and her king is well known, as are her tales of genies, lamps, secret caves and thieves, but there is nothing over-familiar or stale about this performance. Each vignette is briskly paced, and features well defined and beautifully rendered characters, while the well-designed and evocative set is slickly used to create a range of different environments. A top notch show with high production values.

Gilded Balloon, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 5/5 | [Caro Moses]

### Bec And Tom's Awesome Laundry (Gilded Balloon / Bec Hill and Tom Goodliffe)

How awesome, exactly, can a laundry based show be? Well, pretty awesome, actually, as it turns out. It's a deliberately shambolic-seeming affair (the set seems mostly to be made from cardboard and marker pens) that makes in-jokes of its own seeming-inadequacy, and in the process elicits delighted gurgles of laughter from a smallish Sunday crowd, who are more than willing to get interactive with their endearing, bubble-blowing hosts. There's a vague narrative: Tom, the stuffy one, has to make Bec, the silly one, face up to the responsibility of doing the washing, but all sorts of wacky things happen before the spin cycle ends. It doesn't feel like an hour - all over so quickly - what a pity there isn't time to stick on another load!

Gilded Balloon, until 24 Aug.  
tw rating 4/5 | [Caro Moses]

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## Festival People

### How do you flyer?

**For newer acts at the Festival a daily dose of flyer-ing the streets of Edinburgh is as much a part of the Fringe experience as warm-ups, scene changes and curtain calls. Each year a forest of flyers are distributed across the Festival City, but does all that effort actually result in any ticket sales? Well, many a Fringe veteran will tell you, that depends on how you go about your flyer-ing.**

“Last year I came to the Fringe as a punter and I was shocked at how many performers seemed to be putting people off their show as opposed to attracting them” says actor Fionn Gill, who’s done his own fair share of flyer-ing over the years as an actor in, amongst other things, the ThreeWeeks Editors’ Award winning show ‘Keepers’ in 2010.

“There was actually one girl in particular who was shouting ‘Five Star Sell-out Show’ outside the Pleasance Dome whilst furiously waving flyers around. She was getting through to no-one and I wanted to help her. Then I started to think about all the other ineffective flyer-ing you see. The subtle flyer drop on your table. The ‘sales pitch’. The mimed performance piece. The loud performance piece. Or worst of all, looking bored, looking anxious and just handing someone a flyer”.

Wanting to help those failing at flyer-ing, Gill has now launched a new company that sets out to do just that. “Having seen ‘Five Star Sell-out Show’

girl last year, and with many years flyer-ing on the Fringe under my belt, not to mention a background in street charity fundraising, I decided to start Flare Flyer-ing. I’m now in my first year of training people to be much better at flyer-ing and it’s going well”.

Gill offers a variety of training sessions for those bound for flyerer duties, and reckons people can come on leaps and bounds in just an hour or two. He told ThreeWeeks: “We run training that is sometimes behind doors or on the street, or both, and either as a group or with just with one person or company. We look at how you can best sell your show, what are the best things to say, how should you say it, how do you ‘hook’ people, and much more”.

For more information on Gill’s services check [www.flareflyer-ing.com](http://www.flareflyer-ing.com), meanwhile here he provides his top three tips.

1. Have fun and enjoy yourself. If you’re having fun you’re more likely to engage people because warm positive energy is attractive.

2. Connect with people. Establishing a rapport includes someone in what you are doing and makes them feel much more special. Just handing out flyers or rattling off a spiel leaves people feeling cold and bombarded.

3. Choose the right places at the right times. Learn where your audiences are for your show. Where do they hang out? At what time? Are they waiting to see or coming out of other similar shows? Blanket flyer-ing on the Mile, or around Bristo Square, may hit numbers but fewer, more targeted interactions will always be more effective.

## All about ThreeWeeks

**LONGEST ESTABLISHED:** ThreeWeeks is the longest established magazine at the Edinburgh Festival, the world’s biggest cultural event, and has been discovering and championing new and exciting comedy, cabaret, dance, musical, theatre and spoken word talent every summer since 1996.

**HALF A MILLION READERS:** Each August half a million festival-goers rely on the ThreeWeeks free weekly magazine, daily email, website and podcast for a comprehensive guide to all of the festivals that take place in Edinburgh during August, including the International, Book, Art and Politics festivals and the awe inspiring Edinburgh Fringe.

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**THREEWEEKS WEEKLY EDITION:** The ThreeWeeks Weekly Edition is our flagship publication, published weekly during August and packed with reviews, interviews and exclusive columns. You can pick up your free copy of ThreeWeeks from all the key venues at the Edinburgh Festival and numerous other places across the city as well.

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