

ThreeWeeks

EDINBURGH

**Adam Riches: Coach
coaching the Fringe**



HANNAH CHUTZPAH



DOUG SEGAL

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Bryony Kimmings speaks to and for performers with Fringe Central address



ThreeWeeks Editors' Award winner and all-round Fringe star Bryony Kimmings delivered the official welcome address to performers at Fringe Central on Friday, the third such person to deliver this now annual speech designed to formally get Fringe proceedings going.

And, she noted, just her own experiences in the previous 24 hours demonstrated that it was well and truly Edinburgh Fringe time once more. "My name is Bryony Kimmings" she declared. "I am a slightly pregnant, loud mouth feminist performance artist slash comedian slash theatre maker from London. I think that just about covers it. Even I'm not sure what box to put myself in nowadays. Having previewed yesterday and spent the rest of the evening eating ice cream and crying about the dodgy mics I bought off eBay, and the distinct lack of funniness to my jokes about depression, I can tell you that the Edinburgh Festival Fringe has officially begun".

Describing the love hate relationship pretty much all performers have with the world's biggest arts festival, Kimmings mused of the Fringe: "It is a beast and it is rare to tame it, and in some ways you have to ride it for three and half weeks, being careful not to fall off or crack your head open or drown in its drool, and then jump off it and then ask the question 'what just happened'. So I have had fun trying to remember my favourite festival

moment and my worst to share with you today".

Starting with a favourite moment, she went on: "My first ever proper Edinburgh with my first full length solo show 'Sex Idiot' was 2010. I was in the wonderful Zoo venues. I can't ever thank them enough for taking me on, I must have sounded like a nutter on the phone to James with my risk assessment of scissors and bourbon and other flammable goods. My venue was 30 seats in what used to be Zoo Roxy. In the basement. We had six lights and some playback. I think now it is a store room. I tried to get in there last year to peak and the whole stairwell was covered in boxes and cobwebs which made my heart ache a bit".

"It was tiny" she continued. "Two rows, three sides, 50 minutes of me screaming at you about ex-boyfriends and demanding your pubes from you at the end... everything about that should have spelt out disaster. But for whatever reason: stars aligning, trends being set by other like-minded artists, a new found penchant for brash female comics ... that show was a hit. Out of nowhere. Good reviews from big papers, lots of invites to do slots, a gig at Soho Theatre before I left the Festival and a Total Theatre Award right at the end. I remember that summer as bouquets from a fan, skipping from party to party, laughing hard with my producer and best friends, being out our minds with excitement. I picture sunshine and taxis and prosecco".

"Flash forward a year" she went on, switching to the worst Fringe moment. "I find myself standing in the rain outside a flat just that little bit too far from the centre of town. I have an unfinished script in my bag,

a very worried tech beside me and a completely different feeling in my gut. The show was '7 Day Drunk'. My difficult second album".

She expanded: "I had spent July slogging my guts out at Jacksons Lane studio space trying to wrestle any kind of show out of a bunch of terrible material made during a madcap scheme to spend a week with some scientists getting progressively more drunk to prove to a friend that alcohol had no effect on creativity".

"That year no awards, two to three star reviews, audible whispers of 'yeah she made 'Sex Idiot' but...' I picture hangovers, leaky shoes, bad ecstasy tablets, a throat infection and the worst feeling of not understanding how to make art, or what an audience wanted, as I buried my head in the sand and spent hours on the phone to my mum".

The message of these two opposite Fringe experiences just one year apart? "Those two polar extremes sum up how this Festival can go for all of us. And help us keep our feet on the ground as we begin our journeys this year. It could be great, it could be a disaster... and the truth is you have no idea at this stage which it will end up being".

"I think that might be part of this Festival's constant seduction for artists... the whiff of a hit. And I think that we have the best jobs in the world and are so lucky to be here. But believe me, we've all played to two people, we've all hit bum notes when the man from Public Reviews has his notebook out in the front row, and we've all cried as soon as we've stepped off stage.

Addressing the participants in the room, she concluded: "I hope that for you, this year is more like my 'Sex Idiot' experience than my '7 Day Drunk', but if it's not... know that next year is another year and tomorrow we are all fish and chip shop paper".

Kimmings wide-ranging speech also contained plenty of advice for performers, from herself and others, on creativity, the creative business, and the tricky business of dealing with the pesky press. And in amongst all that, there was a five point plan: "Eat healthily. Get out of the city on your day off. Use the facilities and services of the Fringe Society. Don't sweat the bad stuff. And make lots of friends".

Fine words from a fine performer, who is hopefully now in the midsts of creating another fine Fringe memory performing 'Fake It Til You Make It' at the Traverse.

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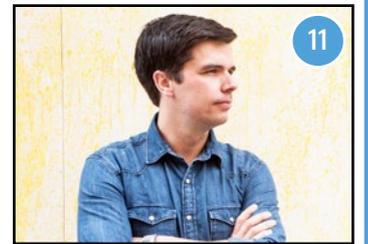
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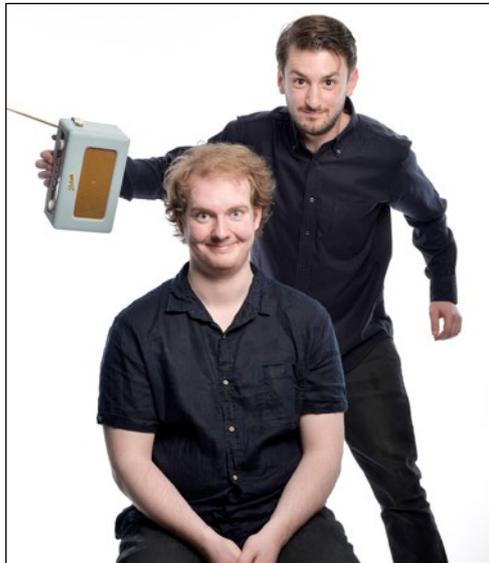
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Best boy gets branded in name a punchline



Doing a Fringe show can be very demanding for performers.

Getting on stage at least once a day, every day, for a whole month, in amongst the constant strain of flying in the rain, while carting props and publicity materials up and down Edinburgh's steepest cobbled pathways, not to mention the somehow compulsory late night drinking, can all have quite an impact on your physical health, your mental well-being and, if nothing else, your bank balance. But that's what September is for. Detox. Stress relief. Frugal living.

Though one of the demands met by Dan Smith of sketch double act Best Boy will be with him for somewhat longer than that, he having turned himself into a prop for their show 'Bested' by having a prominent image tattooed onto his back. "The tattoo plays a big part in one of our sketches" Smith told ThreeWeeks. "It's a big reveal, almost like a punchline that's gone a bit too far. The ridiculousness of getting something permanently branded on your skin for a joke seems like a pretty good way of getting a reaction out of people too".

So why a tattoo and not something simpler, or at least less permanent? "We did draw it on with a marker pen each time for about six months" he says of the image that provides the punchline to the sketch in question, "but as it's on my back Charlie [Mizon, his partner in crime] had to draw it and he's really bad at drawing. Also, I've ruined so many t-shirts that are now stained with pen ink, so an actual tattoo just seemed like the most sensible thing to do. And while drawing it on did still give the sketch a ridiculous ending, actually tattooing it adds a little bit of disbelief for the audience, as they wonder who in their right mind would go that far just to get a laugh".

Who indeed. Though at least the tattooing itself went off without much incident. "We asked the tattoo artist how long she'd been doing it for, and she said just two weeks. Which kind of freaked me out. But it turned out she meant she'd been doing it in London for just two weeks, and had eight years experience under her belt. So it wasn't too traumatic. Charlie only had to hold my hand once".

Now it's on there, has the thought of being branded for life concerned him at all? "It's our first Fringe, so having something like a

tattoo to mark it is actually quite nice. At least it's got a good story behind it, rather than it just being a tattoo for the sake of a tattoo. Of course if we have an awful Fringe then it's going to be a terrible macabre reminder of all that, and then I might want to get laser surgery, or go on 'Tattoo Fixers' on Channel 4. But fortunately the show has been going well so far".

Of course one solution would be to just make every future show he and Mizon write incorporate the tattoo. "We could look at it like that" he says, "or we could say that I've now set a terrible precedent and have to get a new tattoo for each new show that we do. Charlie's got some horrific ideas already, mainly involving my face. But we are getting a lot of use out of it. Whenever we do a gig we now do this sketch, mainly to get value for money out of the tattoo, but also because I like showing it off; it makes me look well hard".

'Best Boy: Bested' is on at Cowgatehead each day at 4.15pm. More at bestboycomedy.co.uk



Rich pickings in Coach Coach's Fringe team

Adam Riches is Coach Coach this Festival, keeping a whole team of Fringe types in check each night as "the greatest frickin' sports movie you ever done saw" unfolds live on stage. Find out who makes up the team as Coach Coach himself files a short report on each of them.

"Alright listen up, my name is Coach Coach and I got me about 800 words to describe the spunky bunch o' 'kids' I been getting match-fit for my show in the Pleasance Dome this year.

It's a list, but unlike most lists, mine will not degrade folks by listing them in order of talent, looks or weight of ankle. Instead, my list will be ranked solely in order of how much I like them as people".



So let's start with a guy who goes by the name of RICHARD GADD. Well, at least in this country he does. This man is an exceptional actor, by

After Meet The Media, a bonus Three To See

It was Meet The Media at Fringe Central this weekend just gone, the annual event where hundreds of performers from across the Fringe get the opportunity to pitch their shows to reviewers and journalists from all the Festival media. Of course, as the history books note, the Fringe Society's big Meet The Media event was inspired by the more intimate Meet The ThreeWeeks Reviewer sessions we use to stage. Which may have been inspired by the Fringe Society's earlier meet the media parties from back in the day. But who remembers that far back into Festival history? No one, that's who.

Anyway, the ThreeWeeks team were pitched at by hundreds of shows, and on the back of it all we put together one last preview-style set of Three To See show recommendations, with Chris, Gemma and Suzy each picking one of the shows they were pitched for this final set of tips. Though don't worry, this isn't the last you'll see of our Three To See show tips, there'll be a new set every day in the ThreeWeeks Daily email, though from this point

onwards based primarily on the opinions of our 2015 review team. Make sure you sign up for the daily bulletin at ThreeWeeks.co.uk/signup.

But first, three to see based on the Meet The Media pitches...

Marc Jennings: Disconnected
Marc Jennings decided to cut himself off from the internet entirely at the start of this year, deactivating his



Facebook account and selling his smartphone, with the intention of going six months without ever connecting to

the net and the flood of messages, notifications, email and porn it delivers. And in his Free Fringe show 'Disconnected' he'll tell you how those six months offline went. As an online publisher, normally we wouldn't approve of such projects, but in August we're in print, so disconnect away!

Cowgatehead, until 29 Aug



According To Arthur

If this children's show from PaddleBoat Theatre is just half as enchanting as the people behind it made it sound in their 90 seconds at the front of the ThreeWeeks queue yesterday, then it's a must-see for younger festival-goers.

We were already pretty curious about this one based on the clip of the show that featured in the first edition of the TW Podcast this Festival. Add in their Meet The Media pitch and we're sold.

Greenside @ Infirmary Street, until 28 Aug



Wasted

After being pitched Kat Woods' play 'Belfast Boy' at Meet The Media last Fringe, we sent a reviewer along who

was blown away by the piece (which is back at Spotlites this year, by the way). This time the pitch was for Woods' new play 'Wasted', what sounds like a fascinating exploration of the issue of consent, in a dark drama based on true events considering what happens when two people have different yet equally blurred recollections of the night before. We're told the conclusions of this piece very much depend on each audience member's preconceptions. Definitely worth checking out.

Gilded Balloon, until 31 Aug



which I mean I took real exception to all of his acting. Sharing a scene with him is like sharing a hot tub with a barracuda. Cramped and full of flesh-splattered teeth.



NICK HALL is a bona fide powder keg of a performer and that ain't no lame metaphor. You actually have to set him alight at the top of

each show and lock all animals indoors until he exits the stage. Exceptionally cheap and wonderfully sexually mature too, for his or indeed any age.



Ask any actor working today who they feel has the coolest nickname totally ruined by the needless inclusion of a soft 'G' and chances are they will answer **BEN TARGET**. Or Jake Gyllenhaal. Words cannot express how highly I rate this young man, which is why I have given him none to say in the show.



BEN WILSON. Just typing the name gives me goosebumps. Not only because he has the stage presence of a poltergeist, but also

because he is what those in the know call an 'apex stage predator'. You don't share the stage with Ben Wilson. You merely exist downwind and hope he doesn't catch your scent. American Dentists have been known to hunt him.



LIZ SMITH is the first of the two known females on my list. Her name roughly translates into Navajo as 'emotes with her gut' and I

have seen her acting lift audiences up, out of their seats and straight out of the auditorium. Having her in your show all but guarantees Arts Council Funding for reasons that will become instantly clear midway through first rehearsal.



CHARLES BOOTH. You know what you're gonna get when you hire Charles Booth. Not only a man whose name suggests he

could have been a Highway Serial Killer back in the seventies, but a consistent ten on the 'how good is his performance' scale. Unfortunately, my 'how good is his performance' scale goes up to 110, so he really does need to start doing better. I don't damn anyone with faint praise. I faint 'em with damn praise.



DANIEL COOK. All you really need to know about Dan Cook is that he is one quarter of defunct sketch group 'Delete The Banjax',

two of whom now live geographically as far away as they can from Dan somewhere in the Southern Hemisphere. Dan's style matches his hair in that he's wild, unpredictable and occasionally in your face. It is

also his mojo, his calling card and his voiceover agent, although his balls do now handle all commercial enquiries.



STEVIE MARTIN. Not to be confused with Steve Martin, which I was when I emailed over an unconditional offer to her

management team, who in a bizarre twist of fate turned out to be Dan Cook's hair again. Has the eyes of a drunk and not in a good way. Time stops still when you're in the same room as Stevie, largely down to the amount of trace metal in her blood. I truly believe she will end up killing me and not even by accident. But then again, I truly believe she will end up killing us all. She's that good.

DAVID ELMS. Not really a people person, more of a persona peopled, so varied and multiple are the internal personalities he struggles with on an almost daily basis. It's rare that you find a talent so highly medicated and yet so punctual, but David has range and is not afraid to use it, sometimes in the space of a single sentence.

Actors often talk about being present in a scene and David is no different, arriving onstage with a cheery 'Here am!', regardless of context. Needs a haircut too. A full body one.



JAMES RICHES. An Actor's Actor in that he acts at being an Actor. Related to someone on the cast, but until Equity bring in compulsory DNA testing for all supporting artistes I guess we'll never know who... A keen student of the craft, although some would say it is high time he graduated, James 'Van Wilder' Riches is in this play and I can think of no higher compliment than that.

THE SHOW: Adam Riches is Coach Coach. Pleasance Dome, until 30 Aug
Check team member show listings at ThreeWeeks.co.uk/coachshows
Photos by David P Scott

ThreeWeeks
Co-Editor
Chris Cooke
chats to
some of our
favourite
performers
taking to the
Fringe stage
this year

COMING UP:

Doug Segal
Hannah Chutzpah
A. Tiger
Goose
Kally Lloyd-Jones
Chris Kent
Elspeth Turner
Adam Forde

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Doug Segal: Back reading minds and influencing people

ThreeWeeks Editors' Award winner Doug Segal - the comedian who reads your mind - wasn't at the Fringe last year. Well, not with his own show. He did end up flying in for eight days to do a guest spot at pretty much every guest-spot-show available. But this year he's back proper, with a fetching new beard, more mind-bending tricks and the show he performed the year we gave him that award. We sat down with Doug to get updated.

CC: So you're back at the Fringe full on proper! How did you enjoy your sort of year off last year?

DS: I missed the Festival every single moment I wasn't there. The Fringe is such a fickle mistress: she punishes you when you are with her and then makes you realise how much you want her when you're not. I've just realised! The Fringe is Tammy 2 from 'Parks & Recreation'! The eight days I came up to "visit" last year were a blast though, and I ended up doing twenty five guest spots in eight days. Sublime. There's something about this festival that just makes it totally magical and as a performer it's amazing, everyone is operating on exactly the same level. Beggars can be more successful than kings. I've got lots of friends who I've watched flourish over the course of a Festival run. The opportunity to do so many performances in such a short space of time is like the best training course in the world.

CC: What have you been doing since you last did a full Fringe run?

DS: Mostly growing a beard you could use to smuggle livestock. Seriously, I've had such a major image change it looks like I've done a Doctor Who and replaced the actor playing me. Oh... and I also did a full national tour of the UK and, bizarrely, Switzerland, culminating in a West End run. My mum is so proud. And I've started headlining a lot of the big comedy clubs, done the Glasgow International Comedy Festival twice, and I made my Latitude debut this year, which went quite well - BBC Suffolk named me and Ruby Wax their 'Picks Of The Festival'. I never imagined my name



would be used in the same sentence as Ruby Wax. At least not outside of a courtroom.

CC: But it seems you couldn't resist the temptation to come back for a full Edinburgh run this year?

DS: Well... actually... I wasn't going to

come back until 2016. I'm working on two really strong concepts for new shows, but that's really slowed me down, as I've found myself writing both at once. But then The Voodoo Rooms/Scottish Comedy Agency/Blonde Ambition rang with an offer I literally couldn't refuse to bring back

the show you lovely people gave me a ThreeWeeks Editors' Award for, and which I won Best Cabaret Show at the Brighton Fringe with, back in 2012. So yeah, I was asked to come!

CC: We should back up for a moment, for the nine people at the

Fringe who have not come across you before, talk us through the basics of your act.

DS: I'm a mind reading comedian. My unique schtick is that I teach the audience how to do it. One review described me as a "cross between Derren Brown and a stand up comedian who teaches you how to do the Jedi mind tricks he's doing". But there again, another described me as "looking like a Goth rockstar who's growing older gracefully", so take your pick.

CC: And for those who missed this show in that award winning year, what does it involve?

DS: In 'How To Read Minds & Influence People' I teach the audience how to detect lies and implant subliminal suggestions. Everyone goes home with a printed mind trick they can do with their friends and the show closes with a random audience member on stage reading the minds of the rest of the audience. And there's jokes. Lotsa jokes. And some of them not puerile!

CC: When doing a full hour show, how do you decide which tricks to include and in what order? Are you aiming for a narrative? Do you need to keep the best for last?

DS: It's actually a really convoluted process. First I'll start with the concept, then I'll devise the mind reading effects I need to tell the story. After that I look to effectively overlay a comedy show on top, which inevitably means I need to go back a step or two and rewrite the effects because I've thought of a funnier way of doing it. The last show also included comedy sketches on video, but for 2016 and 2017 I'm trying to write shows that don't require a screen.

I always want there to be a narrative - in my 2013 show 'I Can Make You A Mentalist' there was a literal story, as during the show I and the audience were stalked by my "arch nemesis" Guri Yeller who appeared near the end to try to sabotage the proceedings - but I want it to build too. In my head there is a graph line where, in terms of the effects, I want to start the show at about eight, take it down to around four and then gradually ramp it up to nine, then ten. Then eleven.

CC: That great Evening Standard quote "imagine if Derren Brown was funny" is pretty prominent on your publicity. Do you feel the pressure to be even funnier this year?

DS: Very much so. I keep pushing myself comedically and I'm really grateful that I'm broadly accepted as standing with one and a half feet in comedy and half a foot in cabaret. Though that does make not falling over tricky.

Ideally I always want both, but if you give me a straight choice between wow's and laughs, I'll take laughs every time. I did a twenty five minute set at Hardeep Singh Kohli's V Deep restaurant last night and around fifteen

minutes of that was just stand up. The other ten where bloody impressive though.

CC: While comedy still dominates here, both the magic and wider cabaret scene seem to have really grown in recent years within the Edinburgh Fringe too. Is that true elsewhere too?

DS: Yeah I think so. John Bishop is hosting a primetime TV variety show. I think variety generally is in ascension at the moment.

CC: Any magic or cabaret top tips for Festival 2015?

DS: Piff is always fabulous value. 'Anna Lou's Contes D'Amour' will be a fabulous French-favoured smut fest. I love EastEnd Cabaret. 'Mr B's Guide To Modern Life' is hilarious, with a real party vibe, and I'm desperate to see the seven foot sad clown with the golden voice that is Puddles Pity Party.

CC: You're always prolific when at the Fringe in terms of popping up at other shows. Where else are we likely to see you this year?

DS: Hahaha! No change there. Currently I'm booked in to do thirty nine spots and that number goes up by a couple every day - I'm just a boy who can't say no. If you want to know what that looks like as a list, well: Cerys Nelmes Presents Pick And Mix, Cabaret At Le Monde, Chortle Fast Fringe, Spanki!, The Hungover Show, The Lock-in Cabaret, The Comedy Mash, Hilarity Bites Showcase, Taste Of The Fringe Showcase, Another Fucking Variety Show, Hardeep And Friends At V Deep, Get Your Own Back Live, Ettieboo's Cabaret Boonanza, Yet Another Comedy Podcast, Comedians Against Humanity, Laughter With Njambi McGrath And Guests, Comedy Death, Late Night Variety with The Martini Encounter, Cabaret Nova, The 5:30 Cabaret At The Famous Spiegeltent, The Underbelly Radio Show, Juliette Burton's Happy Hour and Laugh Train Home.

CC: Now, three years ago you made me say a whole list of things on stage that you'd already got written down on various sheets of paper. I'm not sure I've forgiven you for proving just how impressionable my mind is. Though it all started with a drawing. How did you know I'd drawn a house?

DS: Oh Chris, Chris, Chris. You're making the assumption that you drew a house of your own free will...

CC: And finally, you're a mind reader, answer the question I'm currently thinking of.

DS: The answers is: No. No one can tell just from your walk but I'd avoid communal showers until the swelling has subsided.

THE SHOW: How To Read Minds And Influence People, Voodoo Rooms, until 30 Aug.

THE LINK: dougsegal.com

Photo by Kat Gollock

Hannah Chutzpah: Answering our questions so nicely

Our reviewer loved Hannah Chutzpah's spoken word show at Fringe 2014 declaring that it was so empowering "I left at least three inches taller". The show has evolved since, and returns for this year's Free Fringe. We caught up with Hannah to find out more about her poetry and the themes of her show.



CC: Let's start with the basics. What are the themes explored in 'Asking Nicely'?

HE: It's all about permission, and whether people feel confident and entitled, or like they don't deserve and don't belong. I use quotes and some scientific studies, but a lot of it is things I've observed or spoken to friends about. I've spent the last two years having a coffee, or a pint, with anyone who'll talk about permission with me - from therapists to well-known authors.

There's always a power dynamic involved in asking permission, and there's a lot of nuance, and a lot of it comes from things like gender, class and what you've been raised to expect for yourself or others. The show doesn't actually go into the subject of sexual consent or rape. Everyone assumes it will, but I didn't

feel qualified to cover something that heavy.

Also: it's a poetry show, so I do good words, innit? Lots of assonance and alliteration and just playing with the best way to deliver the words.

CC: We loved the show last year. Has it evolved since then?

HE: The show got a lot slicker over the course of the Edinburgh run last year, but there were two pieces I always knew were placeholders; their link to permission being pretty tenuous. I've dropped them out and written a couple of new poems in their place. Also, I re-jigged the running order and the links between the pieces are much more taut now.

CC: Our reviewer found the whole experience empowering. Is that a specific aim?

HE: I'm not sure I ever aimed at 'empowering', but I did want it to go from pointing out problems and neuroses to a more positive place by the end. The show started when I noticed that women in lesbian bars seemed to have a much prouder more confident posture than women usually do, and I started examining why most women don't seem to be so confident as a default.

CC: When you put together a full one-hour show like this, are you collating pre-existing poems, or do you write new ones to fit the theme.

HE: A bit of both. Having swapped out a few pieces, only three of the nine poems now in the show started out independently. An hour is a long time, so I definitely wanted to have >

/spokenword

FREE CHRIS COOKE'S SPEECH

EDINBURGH FRINGE 2015

IT'S A FREE SPEECH ABOUT FREE SPEECH

ThreeWeeks co-Editor Chris Cooke always saw free speech as a fundamental right, but then started arguing that Robin Thicke's Blurred Lines should be banned. So what is free speech exactly? And is it ever right to censor?

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/comedy

> an arc to it. Some of the building blocks were already there, some I had to go off and make from scratch. That said: most of them do work as stand-alone pieces too.

CC: You mentioned that you cite some scientific and other studies to back up key points made in the show. Did you do lots of research?

HE: I did some research especially for the show - and got through a lot of documentaries, TED talks and blog posts - but I've always been pretty interested in psychology and patterns of what makes people tick. I did psychology in sixth form and edited a few psychology text books in a previous job. I was never good at the stats bit but I always remember interesting case studies or lab tests.

CC: Why did you decide to bring the show back to the Fringe again this year? And why as part of the Free Fringe again?

HE: Last year the people that came loved it, but the audiences were quite small - for a few reasons - and I had some job and housing stuff going on in real life that made it quite hard work. This year I've got more headspace to really enjoy just being at the Fringe, and I've had some lovely reviews which should help get the word out.

I'm with the Free Fringe because I've always done the Fringe through PBH shows, and I've grown up through it, from my first time flyering for an improv troupe to doing my own solo show with five star reviews.

The Fringe can feel quite competitive for performers but the PBH spoken word shows really feel like a community. Everyone does guest slots and recommends other shows. It's really friendly. Also: audiences can pay what they think it's worth, so there's that try-before-you-buy element.

CC: Is the Edinburgh audience particularly good for this kind of show?

HE: I think the Edinburgh audience is willing to take more chances and try - say - a feminist poetry show, whereas the rest of the year you'll mostly only be performing to people who already like poetry. It's a chance to try things out for audiences and for performers!

CC: And for the audience participation swearing?

HE: Yeah, so there's a bit where I get everyone to shout. It's a lot of fun. There are very few opportunities to shout without hurting someone's feelings. 'Asking Nicely' is a safe space. For swearing.

CC: In your bio you cite a high court judge - describing you as being "of good character" - and the Metropolitan Police - who went with "potential maggot-thrower". What events led to these accolades?

HE: I just like those quotes! I got involved in monitoring abuse of power by the police after I was one of five idiots arrested in London on the day of the royal wedding - for being dressed as a zombie.

We were buying coffees like anyone else in a branch of Starbucks at the time, but we were arrested for a breach of the peace, in case royalists were offended. Even though we were nowhere near the wedding or anything - we'd turned up to a zombie flashmob protesting cuts to LGBT healthcare.

We took the police to court and four years later our appeal is still chugging its way through the legal system. Since I got involved in monitoring abuses of police power though, my four hours in a police cell for fancy dress pales in comparison to some of the horror stories I've heard.

THE SHOW: Hannah Chutzpah / PBH's Free Fringe, Pilgrim, until 29 Aug

THE LINK: hannahchutzpah.com

Photos by Kat Gollock

A. Tiger: The tasty Fringe



I've never interviewed a tiger before. But this is the Fringe. And this Fringe a tiger has written a play. A Tiger in fact. The A stands for Aloysius by the way. And while he may have had a bit of help from Stewart Pringle, otherwise known as Artistic Director of the Old Red Lion Theatre in London, it was Aloysius we sat down with to discuss new children's show 'You Look Tasty!'.

CC: OK, I'll admit this is the first time I've interviewed a tiger. I'm going to be safe throughout the interview, right?

AT: That rather depends. If you make it snappy, I'm sure you'll be fine.

CC: So tell me all about yourself, your life story, your journey to becoming a playwrighting tiger.

AT: Well I don't want to give too much away, but I spent altogether too much of my life cooped up in a zoo. Coming to Edinburgh has been a real treat for me, a chance to stretch my paws, sharpen my claws, exercise my jaws.

CC: Why did you decide to write a play?

AT: It just seemed like playwrights got such an easy ride of it! Scribble a few scenes, take a nap, and then all these juicy people just stroll in to watch it. The whole hunter-gatherer thing can be such a bore and so exhausting. Why go chasing after your prey when you can knock out a play and they'll come rolling in?

CC: Tell us about the premise, what happens?

AT: That's probably best left to Sue, who's our (surviving) actor. It's the story of my Grand Escape from the zoo, about some of the friends I ate along the way. And it's about all of you lovely people, who have come to join in with the feast! No, the fun. Sorry, I meant to say the fun.

CC: I hear you had some help from a guy called Stewart Pringle. How did you meet him? What role did he play?

AT: Oh he did sod all, really. He typed it



/spokenword

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up for me and suggested a few tweaks here and there, which I've put in just to humour him. The thing is, tigers can't touch-type, Stewart can't touch-type either but he's got Microsoft Office so it's just made the admin side of things that much smoother.

CC: Stewart is more usually associated with an Old Red Lion. Did he try and get any lions in the play?

AT: Constantly. And panthers. There was a bit with a leopard that he wanted to put in, but that's where I put my paw down. I actually think this big cat thing of his is a little perturbing. I'll be keeping my eye on him.

CC: How did you pick your cast? Acting potential or lunch potential?

AT: Lunch potential, by and large.

CC: There are songs as well. Did you write them?

AT: No, no, no. Tigers don't write songs. Tigers subcontract. We got a chap called Paddy The Baptist in. He's very good.

CC: You make a brief appearance in the show I think. Have you caught the acting bug? Maybe a one-tiger-show next year?

AT: I hope so! I'm actually hoping to get a part in 'The Tiger That Came to Tea' when it next heads out on tour. I think I could liven things up a bit.

CC: Have you got any Tiger-like inspirations?

AT: Well Tony is the big one, obviously. He's done so well for himself. Also Shere Khan of course, terribly sophisticated chap. And then there's the one from the Esso adverts, who's actually a crushing bore, but again he's been very successful with it.

CC: Will you be visiting Edinburgh Zoo while you're in town?

AT: I certainly will not. Me and zoos, we're just not made for one another. Also I've heard their tigers are terribly vulgar.

CC: And what other shows and performers would you like to see the Festival? Or maybe eat for lunch?

AT: It's a bumper year for tigers at the Pleasance, it really is. There's 'The Tiger Who Came For Tea', of course. And 'Mr Tiger Goes Wild'. Tigers galore! So I'll be seeing those. Check out the competition. Then devour it. But I'll also make sure to catch Gyles Brandreth, because he's awfully funny, isn't he?

THE SHOW: You Look Tasty!, Pleasance Courtyard, until 31 Aug



/childrens

Goose: Set loose with a one-man cartoon

Adam Drake and Ben Rowse are, together, Goose. Ben writes and directs. Adam writes and performs. Together they create a "sweaty one-man cartoon". Well, the sweat is all Adams. Having formed a working partnership in 2013 to co-write the one man farce 'Robin', they returned to the Fringe last year under the Goose moniker, winning plenty of acclaim along the way. And now they return with a brand new show called 'Kablamo'. We set the duo the task of filling out a Goose-themed questionnaire and these are the answers they gave us.

CC: Let's start at the start, tell me about both your Fringe experiences before you started properly working together.

G: Adam did the Footlights tour show, so has experience of playing to sell-out rooms. There's no substitute for this kind of experience and they're right: it has really helped us see how far we're falling short of success. Ben did nothing except watch shows and take up floor space.

CC: How did you come to work together on 'Robin'?

G: We knew each other at uni and Adam prodded Ben into writing a comedy-y play-y thing-y. It started with just Adam onstage and no one complained enough at the time. Give them an inch... it's all got horribly out of hand.

CC: Was it your intention to work together long term back in 2013 or did it just evolve from there?

G: Evolved. But not in a definitive, cool Pokemon-style. The pace has been more of a Darwinian 'monkeys to man', but we feel we're moving towards something we feel really comfortable in. Ben (Ben's dad) has a strict 'assess-how-it's-going-every-year' policy, which has been quite useful in making sure we improve a little every year, while also terrifying us.

CC: You describe Adam as the "sweaty one-man cartoon". What can we expect from a Goose show?

G: It's one man doing a breakneck poly-character sketch show with a narrative. With lots of cutaways and all that sort of nonsense. If we had to describe the show as one single song, that song would be almost impossibly odd (and would feature Bruce Forsyth).

CC: And tell us more about 'Kablamo'. How does it compare to previous shows?

G: So last year's show had an opening we always enjoyed performing, a spoof biopic of David Schwimmer, and the pace and pointlessness of it sort of seemed to suit us. So expect more of that: sweaty edifices of nothing.

G: We do shows in London, so there's that. And the crying. Writing the show, then changing it entirely also helps pass the time, until the panic sets in.

CC: So is the Fringe now very much part of your performance year?

G: Yeah, it feels like the weather turning and we should be out on a porch muttering 'Edinburgh's a-brewin...', except it's not the weather than changes, it's the colour and consistency of your poos.

this Fringe, but 'talent scouting' makes us sound a bit too cool-for-school. Maybe 'talent begging'?

CC: Any shows you'd like to tip right now?

G: Well, Gein's Family Giftshop, obviously. We've now recommended each other so many times, as comedy acts but also spouses to our siblings. Emma Sidi we saw last night and she blew us away. Liam Williams, The Pin, Lolly Adefope, Max And Ivan, Beard and Joseph Morpurgo. Also, Daphne, although this is as much a logistical tip



CC: How do you go about creating your shows, how does the collaboration process work?

G: We put on a series of tortuous previews, then chuck it all out in the last two weeks and paper over the cracks. It is almost unbelievably inefficient.

CC: Since formally launching as Goose, what has been happening for you guys beyond Edinburgh?

CC: Adam - you help run the Suspiciously Cheap Comedy night in London. So will be talent scouting while in Edinburgh too?

G: Suspiciously Cheap Comedy has been one of the most fun things we've ever done: we get to hang out with Gein's Family Giftshop, watch our favourite acts and - so far - we've had really lovely audiences. We'll maybe be thinking about Suspiciously Cheap

as a comedy tip - book now as they've almost sold out every date ever. And many more...

CC: I hear there might be possible TV pilots in the pipeline. What are your ambitions for Goose?

G: Get a little bit better every year.

THE SHOW: Kablamo, Assembly George Square, until 30 Aug

THE LINK: goosecomedy.co

/comedy

Kally Lloyd-Jones: Moved by Nijinsky's last jump

The extraordinary yet ultimately tragic life of early Twentieth Century Russian ballet dancer and choreographer Vaslav Nijinsky has been widely documented in books and film, but this summer Company Chordelia use his story as inspiration for an entirely new piece of dance theatre. We spoke to the company's Kally Lloyd-Jones about that life story and how it inspired her new show 'Nijinsky's Last Jump'.

CC: I suppose we should start by reminding ourselves who Vaslav Nijinsky was and a little about his life. Give us a very quick overview of his life and career.

KLD: Vaslav Nijinsky was born in 1890 and is still considered one of the world's most amazing dancers, famous for his incredible jump and also for his ability to totally inhabit his roles. He then choreographed ground-breaking works such as 'The Rite Of Spring' and 'L'Après-midi d'un Faun'. His career was cut short at the age of 29 though when he was diagnosed with schizophrenia and he spent the rest of his life in and out of mental institutions and never performed in public again.

CC: What made you want to explore Nijinsky's life in a piece of dance theatre?

KLD: He is a fascinating man. He

remains legendary even though there is almost no footage of him dancing, and I find his story and what we know about him compelling, heart breaking and disturbing.

CC: Did you have any specific source materials, and were there any specific aspects of his story you wanted to portray?

KLD: I had read one of Nijinsky's biographies when I was fourteen and it stayed with me. Much later, when I read Nijinsky's diary, written in the six weeks leading up to his diagnosis, the inner life of this man was something I wanted to explore. I have now read several biographies and many other books, as well as watching films and documentaries. I have known all along that I wanted to hone in on his inner life, his mind and what happened to him. I read that schizophrenia is



notes and slowly a picture emerges and I start to create a story board or a scenario, and also pick music. I will then begin talking to designer Janis Hart and lighting designer Laura Hawkins and they will become part of the process. Then I met up with Michael Daviot, who wrote the text, and we discussed all the scenes and made decisions about the text. He is amazingly knowledgeable and we had a great time delving into things. Then there's another stage of having the cast, creating choreography and scenes, and sculpting the material, honing it into the final show.

CC: Tell us more about Company Chordelia, when and why did you set it up?

KLD: I set up Company Chordelia in 2002 because I really wanted to make my own work. I think I made my first show with £2500 and slowly it has grown from there. I can see that my work has changed a lot over the years, and having your own company gives you the room to grow, which is one of the best things. I like to make work which uses other forms as well as dance, which is driven by some kind of narrative or character - it's theatrical in nature and so I work with a brilliant creative team with whom I have built strong relationships.

CC: Why did you decide to premiere this new production at the Edinburgh Fringe?

KLD: I love the experience of the Fringe. The opportunity to perform a work for a very eclectic and international audience; it's unique and exciting. It's also really great to be able to do fifteen shows in the same venue - it enables the cast, team and me to really settle into it and learn new things about the material.

CC: Across the International Festival and the Fringe there is a really strong programme of dance theatre, though it doesn't necessarily have the same profile as other genres. What advice would you have for people less familiar with this art form when navigating this programme?

KLD: I know that people are a little afraid of dance, but all I would say is - it's all theatre. Treat it in the same way and choose what sounds interesting to you. Go with an open mind and whatever your experience is, it's right. There is no wrong interpretation or understanding. Be bold!

CC: And finally, what are your long-term plans for 'Nijinsky's Last Jump'?

KLD: We will be touring the show all around Scotland and the UK next year, and then who knows?

THE SHOW: Nijinsky's Last Jump, Dance Base, until 23 Aug

THE LINK: chordelia.co.uk

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the result of a constitutional fragility coupled with psychological stress. I can't help wondering what might have happened if any one of a number of things had been different.

CC: Different aspects of Nijinsky's story have been told through more conventional film and theatre in the past. Given his art form, do you think telling his story through dance is more appropriate?

KLD: I think that depends on what you want to portray. This piece is deliberately not biographical or linear. I have deliberately not mentioned any of the very prominent people in his life - Diaghilev, his wife Romola, his sister Bronislava. I have also steered clear of trying represent his dancing in a literal way, so the movement is often more about an exploration of his state of mind. In his diary he talks a lot about rhythm and the way he writes is often poetic and rhythmical, and that sense of rhythm permeates the show on many levels.

CC: Although there are lots of photos of Nijinsky, as you say, there is almost no footage of him actually dancing. Did the images we have, or records of his choreography, influence the piece?

KLD: The show is woven through with references to iconic images and moments, so that if you have any prior knowledge you will recognise them. This imagery is often linked to the text with this idea of the way that he worked or saw things. They link his thinking behind those images and the moments we are left with.

CC: How is the narrative communicated? Does it help to be aware of Nijinsky's life or work before seeing the show?

KLD: I think how much you know about Nijinsky will alter your experience of the show but not your understanding of it or - more importantly - your ability to feel it. The show is about a man, a human being for whom life is difficult. It's about the choices he made as much as it is about a dancer or choreographer.

CC: How do you go about creating a show like this? What's the creative process, in terms of story, music and choreography?

KLD: That's a hard question! By the time the show opens I am thinking: how did this happen? But I will try! After the research, there is a long period of allowing my brain to think without actually deliberately thinking. I make



more breathing space with the full hour show.

CC: Other than writing the new show, what else have you been up to between 'Uncorked' and 'Stop Stalling'?

CK: Well, we have had a hectic year, what with the wedding and the honeymoon. We also moved to the UK, just outside London. I it's been pretty non-stop, so I'm really happy to be just settled in Edinburgh for a while.

CC: When I saw your show last year it was being filmed for a documentary. What was that all about?

CK: That's right, they followed me and a few other Irish comedians around for a couple of months to document the life of an up and coming stand-up. You literally just reminded me of it. It's done and dusted but hasn't aired yet, so I'll keep you posted!

CC: And what's your plans post-Fringe 2015?

CK: I am heading back to Ireland in September to do the Dublin Fringe, sharing the bill with another Irish comic Gearoid Farrelly. I'd like to get more established on the UK circuit and possibly get over to Oz for some of the festivals there. And I'll hopefully be writing a new show for a Edinburgh next year too.

THE SHOW: Chris Kent Stop Stalling, Assembly George Square, until 31 Aug

THE LINK: chriskentcomedy.com

Photo by Kat Gollock

Chris Kent: No stalling

Last year Chris Kent entertained his audience with stories aplenty set in his hometown of Cork, in which various of his family members appeared. Perhaps looking for new characters with which to play, this year he got married, inspiring his new show 'Stop Stalling'. Though, he insists, he never actually intended to turn his wedding into new comedy material, but events unfolded that made it an inevitability. We caught up with Chris to find out more.

CC: So, let's start with the new show, what topics and themes are you covering in 'Stop Stalling'?

CK: Well I got married last year so a lot of the show revolves around that and our honeymoon. It was an eventful year and, as the honeymoon deteriorated, a selfish part of me was thinking this could be a good Edinburgh show.

CC: Your family featured very heavily in your show last year, how much comedic licence do you employ in the stories you tell?

CK: I try staying as close to the truth as possible. Most of the stories are already funny to me anyway. I do, of course, use some comedic licence to wrap up a story or make myself or others whittier, but often it isn't

needed too much. It's just about articulating an already funny story and delivering it in a way that works as standup.

CC: Did your family mind being featured in your show that way?

CK: I never checked with them, but they did come to see that show and really liked it. My dad is delighted to feature in any of my standup, often claiming lines I wrote as his own.

CC: Given the premise, I assume your new wife features in this show? Did you prepare her for that eventuality pre-marriage?

CK: Yes, she does feature heavily, but I honestly never intended to write about her or my wedding, it just happened to be quite eventful and inspirational.

She is pretty laid back anyway and was happy I had something to write about.

CC: Your home town featured a lot in your show last year too. Is that true of the new show? Is Cork simply comedy gold?

CK: Yeah, that was the first time I really talked about that and I was surprised how well it lent itself to comedy material. It doesn't really feature at all in this show. It's a pretty different show, but it will always feature in a way, because that's where I grew up and developed my sense of humour.

CC: How does doing full hour shows at Edinburgh compare to performing on the comedy club circuit?

CK: It's completely different but I enjoy both immensely. The circuit is obviously shorter spots but the crowd are normally warmed up for you. I do like getting an hour, but it's all on you, there's nothing to fall back on, which is great for progress I think.

CC: Your Edinburgh shows have some longer stories in them. Can those be transferred over to those shorter club routines, or are they just for full shows like this one?

CK: So far I've been able to transfer over to the clubs easily enough. I break up the longer stories with some short bits. I develop the stories in the clubs anyway, but I do feel I have a little

/comedy

Elsbeth Turner: Ballads of old inspire writing new

In 'SpectreTown' playwright Elspeth Turner explores the traditions, history, dialect and folk songs of North East Scotland from over a century ago, before bringing things bang up to date, and considering how that history still impacts on the present day. Along the way she mined an archive of so called bothy ballads, gathered stories about the secretive Horseman's Word, and workshopped her emerging script with the community from which she was inspired. We spoke to Elspeth about the inspirations for her new play, the fascinating process she went through to write the piece, and the challenges of writing, producing and acting in a new play.



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CC: So, an important starting point, what are bothy ballads?

ET: A bothy ballad is a kind of traditional Scottish folk song, mostly particular to North East Scotland. These songs began emerging really strongly in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. As I understand it, they came out of a changing agricultural landscape which created an itinerant workforce, moving from one big farm town to the next. The unmarried male labourers on these farms slept in very basic out-buildings called bothies, and in the evenings would entertain themselves by singing songs - some old, some recent - though often adapted to make them specific to their own situation - and some new. In these songs the men felt free to praise or criticise the people they worked for, the women around them, and celebrate or bemoan their own status in the town. So they're a rich source of social history, and often quite funny, as well as being very political.

CC: When were you first exposed to this tradition, and what inspired you to research it some more?

ET: While spending time writing in Portsoy, in the North East, I came across something in a book about The Horseman's Word. A farm town, from the 1840s and into the Twentieth century, until tractors came

in, depended on horses and so also depended on horsemen to drive them. At some point, probably also in the Nineteenth Century, though some say it's older, a union of horsemen called 'The Horseman's Word' was created. The men of 'The Word' were believed to have a particular power over horses, and so they became valuable to the tenant farmers, which gave them some leverage to negotiate better conditions and fees and so on.

Since it was in their interest to keep 'the secrets of the Word' amongst themselves, their meetings and initiations were clandestine affairs, mostly conducted during the night in a far off barn. These men were said to have some magical power over women, too, and in some bothy ballads that's certainly the image they were selling. All of this I found very interesting, as a woman who writes plays and songs, and I wanted to delve some more into this slightly murky-sounding masculine arena, where they freely sang songs from a woman's perspective too. Then I asked a farmer friend about The Word and he told me quite plainly that he couldn't discuss it with a woman, so that was that - I had to get into it then!

CC: Tell us the basic premise of 'SpectreTown'.

ET: At the top of the play, we meet

two farm labourers, working in a Nineteenth Century farm town, called Meg and Doddie. They have grown up together and begin falling in love, but this is interrupted when two things happen: Doddie joins The Horseman's Word, and he also begins following what Meg sees as the radical preachings of a new church minister.

As they reach breaking point, we leave them to join their descendants down the line, who are living in modern day Aberdeen and are in various kinds of trouble. What we look at is how the actions, habits and temperaments of our ancestors might carry consciously down the line, and unconsciously down the bloodstream, and whether it helps for us to be aware of those tendencies and that history, or not.

CC: How have you translated the themes of the old ballads to modern day?

ET: The people writing and singing these songs are trying to make sense of the world around them, and questioning why one man might be his boss and not another. These farm servants were living in incredibly harsh conditions and found a way through it by singing about it. I think there's great power in that. Nowadays I think we're encouraged to live quite passive lives, to sit and watch stuff happen, to sort of drown in a deluge

of entertainment and distraction. What's happening now in this country is that folk no longer wish to sit back, they are probing, questioning, contesting the way the world is, where power and wealth is distributed and how. I think by exploring these songs in a contemporary play, we're seeing that the way people try to assert themselves - with the world and with each other - doesn't have to be that different. Except that now women have more of a voice where they didn't before.

CC: Tell us about how you further developed the show in Tullynessle in Aberdeenshire.

ET: We spent a week in the lovely studio at Cumbernauld Theatre working on the play before presenting a work in progress at The Traverse. Then we headed up to present the piece in Tullynessle in the heartland of the old North East farm towns, which felt totally fitting.

We presented some script extracts and songs, and had a lot of chat with the audience during and afterwards with a cup of tea and a scone. We were joined on stage too by the great singer and poet of the North East Sheena Blackhall, who had everyone singing along. The atmosphere was perfect for tossing around opinions and ideas. The oldest audience member was 102 and had a brilliant memory for his days working with horses!

CC: How did the locals there respond to your project?

ET: We were testing the script in its early stages, but they were extremely enthusiastic and generous in their feedback and suggestions, which meant I left with so many ideas and food for thought. Also, it all led to an impassioned discussion about the local Doric dialect, and what it means to them to hear it on stage, which really solidified my intentions to write and put on this play in an authentic North East dialect.

CC: The show has an original score by Matt Regan. How did that come about and how did he go about developing the music?

ET: Matt is an incredibly talented musician and composer. He has been working with us on the project since our development week last October. We began by heading into the archived recordings at the School Of Scottish Studies here in Edinburgh and listened to lots of bothy songs, and interviews with horsemen, mostly from the 1950s. He began exploring how to allow these to feed the contemporary story we're telling - by playing with electronic music, looping and effects - and I, in turn, let them feed into my writing.

Then once we were in a rehearsal room with our Director, Matthew Lenton, Matt created the soundscape and score through experimenting,

really, with all of us on our feet, responding to the story we realised we were telling as we went along. Our wonderful Assistant Director, Rob Jones, also helped to create some of the sound you hear in the show, and he and Matt were so insightful in reflecting and underscoring what was happening in the space. It was beautiful to witness. Matt is on stage with us, creating this feast of sounds and music live, and I love that he's very much a part of the open theatricality we have in our storytelling.

CC: You wrote the play and perform in it, with Matthew directing in the middle. Is it challenging giving up your script to a director, and then performing to his direction?

ET: It can be challenging playing the three roles of actor, writer and producer - for me and for the whole team - but we generally get through that by being kind and patient with each other. And I am always, always learning. However, I never really felt I was giving up the script to Matthew, we had a great conversation right from the off, and he was always very generous in asking me my intention with certain trickier aspects of it, so that he'd be able to discover how to communicate that intention.

During rehearsals I was also doing a lot of editing and some re-writes - sometimes at home in the evenings

and sometimes on my feet in the room - so that was challenging at times, but eventually you have to leave the writing alone and invest completely in the story you're telling as an actor.

CC: Tell us more about Stoirm Og, why did you set up the company?

ET: I set up the company in order to present my first play 'The Idiot At The Wall' at the Fringe. and then the following year used it to tour the play around the highlands and islands of Scotland. We soon realised that there was a hunger in these remote places for powerful, challenging, professional theatre, which poses big questions as well as telling great stories.

I also realised that I loved delving into our country's social, political and cultural history, and that a great way to do this is through folklore and folk songs. And audiences seemed to love that exploration of history, culture and identity by a young company, especially in an age where older generations might assume young folk aren't interested in listening to them.

CC: You are currently company in residence at Cumbernauld Theatre. Does having this base help when developing new works?

ET: Yes, bigtime! From the start, everyone at Cumbernauld Theatre has been incredibly supportive. It's a beautiful theatre and studio too. As a

new company, what you mainly need is space, so it was very special for us to have been tucked away in those woods for five weeks creating this.

CC: Why did you decide to premiere the new show at the Edinburgh Fringe?

ET: We wanted to make a certain leap onto an international platform, and in a festival where you are trying to find your audience in a throng of thousands of shows, it felt daunting and so completely necessary to debut this Scots dialect play here. After all, we're an Edinburgh company and we have this incredible arts festival on our doorstep!

CC: You will be performing in a number of village halls in North East Scotland after the Fringe. Do you expect to get a different reaction from audience more familiar with the tradition that inspired the play?

ET: Yes, certainly, and that's one of the things I'm most looking forward to about the tour - talking with these village hall audiences and feeling the room vibrate with their reaction to it - good, bad, angry, moved. It's what people might carry away from our performance that excites me.

THE SHOW: SpectreTown, Assembly Hall, until 31Aug

THE LINK: stoirmog.blogspot.co.uk

Photo by Mihaela Bodlovic

/theatre

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06-30 AUGUST 2015



Adam Forde: Storytellers face off on the family fringe

Story Pocket Theatre charmed their debut Fringe last year with their award-winning production of 'Arabian Nights'. This year they return with not one, not two, but three shows in the children's programme. 'Arabian Nights' is back, while the company also put their spin on all things Grimm. And then, in a quirky twist, the storytellers who lead both those shows meet head to head in their third show 'Storyteller, Storyteller'. We spoke to the company's writer and co-director Adam Forde to find out more.

CC: You have three shows at the Festival this year, so let's deal with each in turn. First of all you are bringing back the award winning 'Arabian Nights'. For the uninitiated, talk us through that show. Has it evolved since last year at all?

AF: 'Arabian Nights' is a pretty hectic dash through four stories, but at the heart of the show is the story of Sheherazade and the King Shahryar. The King plans to execute each new wife every day to prevent them betraying him, but Sheherazade tells him stories and slowly softens his heart. The four stories are all very funny, but in different ways - slapstick, song, puppetry and some lovely visual comedy. The show has been tweaked a little but we have kept the same cast together, they are such a tight team and have embraced any small

changes. We're very proud of it.

CC: That was your debut show at last year's Festival, and I think it's fair to say you received much acclaim. I take it you had a good Fringe?

AF: Last year was a fantastic experience for the company. We got lovely reviews across the board and of course won the Primary Times Children's Choice Award, which was very special for such a new company. It really helped put the company on the map and so we were confident about bringing three shows up this year.

CC: Have you been performing 'Arabian Nights' ever since?

AF: We've been touring all over the place since last year's Fringe, including at the Royal Festival Hall in May as



part of the Alchemy Festival - that was a very exciting experience. We've visited some lovely theatres across the country, and we also visited Poland for a week of shows in Warsaw and in September we will be performing in Dubai. It's been a great year for us.

CC: Let's move onto the new shows. What can we expect from 'A Pocketful Of Grimms'?

AF: 'A Pocketful Of Grimms' was a natural progression from 'Arabian Nights'. Sheherazade's stories are a timeless collection and the Grimm Brothers are the same. We tell five stories with a rather lovely prologue and epilogue. As with 'Arabian Nights', we start with a storyteller who helps the cast create the stories, and all of the magic and wonder that comes from such well known fairy tales. There is plenty of silliness but also a healthy dash of romance, adventure and a smattering of the weird. But, once again, it's storytelling which drives everything we do.

CC: It seems you like working with classic stories. What are the pros and cons of this approach?

AF: Working with the classics is a joy - they are such enduring stories. With Grimms we looked at hundreds of the stories to choose the right balance for our show. So many are very well known but only in their modern form. With those we've chosen, we've gone back to the originals and drawn from them, rather than the more modern versions. For instance, 'Lily And The Lion' is recognisable as 'Beauty And The Beast', but there is a lot more to it than the version we know today.

Also, storytellers of the Grimms' era were far less worried about exposing the children to slightly macabre stories, and many of audiences have been surprised and delighted by the ending of 'Rumpelstiltskin'. I guess the only drawback to working on these classics is that there are so many to

choose from. We could do a dozen sequels of each show and still not have reached half way down the list of stories. And, in the case of Grimms, a lot of companies tackle those stories. We'd like to think that our approach is slightly different and our audiences so far have been saying some lovely things.

CC: You're promising some of the Brothers Grimm's less well known stories. What do they include?

AF: One of my favourite stories as a child was 'The Golden Goose', but it doesn't have the same popularity as way back then. So we've put that in - it's very silly and there is a big surprise in store for one or two audience members. We're also telling the story of 'The Bird, The Mouse And The Sausage' which is short and very silly. And as I said, 'Lilly And The Lion' will be recognised as 'Beauty And The Beast', but the second part of the story is very rarely told.

CC: And let's come to 'Storyteller, Storyteller'. This seems a little different to the other two. How does it work?

AF: Each of our shows has a storyteller to guide the audience and the rest of the cast. Each knows he is the only storyteller, but we wondered what might happen if they met. And so that's what 'Storyteller, Storyteller' is about. The two meet on neutral ground and then try and outdo one another. It's a lovely very funny session of clowning that I think will delight anyone with a sense of humour. I laugh like a drain every time we run through it.

CC: It's a great idea! How did it evolve into a standalone show?

AF: Well, once we came up with the meeting of the storytellers, it was simply a case of playing with lots of ideas and gradually the show emerged. It's been a lovely collaboration between our storytellers

- Ashley Bates from 'Grimms' and Luke Pitman from 'Arabian Nights', and my co-director Jules Black.

CC: You've got two shows at Gilded Balloon this year, and one in the Freestival. Why did you decide to go that route?

AF: Although our shows are simple and beautiful, we do try to create high production values. Having performed at Gilded Balloon last year we were very keen to return. It's such a great venue and brilliantly run. They were also happy to have us back and very encouraging about the Grimms show. Taking 'Storyteller, Storyteller' to Freestival was a decision based a little bit on cost, but mostly because in the future we'd like it to play in a wide variety of small venues and on the streets. We thought it would be a great way to showcase the idea of the show. It can be played in a library or a car park - given a little traffic control! - and at festivals across the UK that have theatre and children's tents. I think it was the informality of the free-show-fringe ethos that appealed to us for this show. It's pretty different to our other shows.

CC: And how have you been preparing for a three show Fringe?

AF: Lots of Berocca! It's actually been a frantic preparation period. Rehearsing two new shows while the other one was still playing dates around the country is logistically not easy. We have a great team though and so it hasn't felt too bad. Now we're here and the shows are up and running we're starting to relax a little bit - though not too much! - and getting to enjoy the Festival.

THE SHOWS:

Arabian Nights, Gilded Balloon, until 23 Aug
A Pocketful Of Grimms, Gilded Balloon, until 31 Aug
Storyteller Storyteller, New Waverley Arches, until 23 Aug

THE LINK: storypockettheatre.co.uk

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CHILDREN'S SHOWS

Damsel in Success: Fairytales Retold (Not Cricket Productions)

This engaging new children's show retells Grimm's fairy tales with a modern, feminist edge. Three siblings are read fairy tales, but one, Rose, is unsatisfied by the speechless damsels and re-imagines Grimm's classic protagonists as empowered women. Golfo Migos portrays Rose's playful, childlike curiosity pleasingly, and humour and physicality are used well, but the piece feels a bit wordy and fast-paced at times, leading to a slight information overload. The set is beautifully immersive; audiences are invited to sit on the floor of the bedroom to watch the piece, yet though this is apt for this production, it can become rather uncomfortable. However, the warmth of the cast and this involving setting leave children feeling at home and comfortable watching this well produced comedy.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Stephanie Withers]

Jack And Molly And The Beanstalk (C Theatre)

Family fun with a good moral message, 'Jack and Molly and the Beanstalk' is a reworking of the classic tale 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Low-tech but high on charisma, the show's cast engages its

young audience from the second they walk in the door, frequently encouraging the children to get involved in what's going on on-stage. Furthermore, the writer is to be commended for eschewing entirely the notion that all little girls want to be helpless princesses, and including the feisty character of Molly Whuppie, from the traditional Scottish fairytale, who shows girls that they can be anything they want to. While the show won't be anything new to the younger viewers' adult companions, it still has a lot to offer.

C, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Megan Wallace]

The Secret Garden (Not Cricket Productions)

Not Cricket Productions have created an evocative period piece, which offers children and adults alike a chance to re-experience Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic tale. The set is stunning: a child's bedroom softly lit and papered with pages from an old novel, while the audience sits on the floor, encircling this performance space. The musical element was unexpected (by me, at least), but the cast offer some impressive vocals and these musical interludes help to liven up a story which, though touching, may be a bit boring for younger children. Overall, the company has done a great job of condensing the source material down to an hour, without losing the charisma of the original.

C Nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Megan Wallace]



The History Of Music (Buzz Brass)

Fancy a good laugh? Like music? Perfect! This show is great fun, musically excellent and completely enjoyable for both children and adults. The style is similar to the 'Horrible Histories' series and children will enjoy the daftness whilst romping through a tour of the history of music. The musical examples are played and acted out by a first class brass quintet, with a likeable flair for humour and for pleasing a crowd without uttering a word, and it's narrated by a hilariously egotistical MC who engages easily and naturally with his young audience. I can't praise this show highly enough for imparting sophisticated information in a way that both teaches and amuses children. Demystifies the musical mystique with a big smile!

New Town Theatre, until 30 Aug. tw rating 5/5 | [Louise Rodgers]

TIMMY FAILURE

MISTAKES WERE MADE

"Mistakes were NOT made - I was giggling the whole way through!"

Alice, age 10, *Lovereading4kids*

"10/10 for this brilliant one man show"

Isaac East, age 9, *Lovereading4kids*

Hilarious storytelling show for children aged 8+



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COMEDY

Cut The Mustard (Chisnail & I)

When two very talented performers manage to find each other and create a dynamic double act it can be a wonderful thing. In 'Cut The Mustard', Jack Chisnail's dry style compliments Georgia Bruce's enthusiasm and it's immediately clear that the duo have bags of chemistry. The show itself was entertaining, with a mixture of music, monologues and sketches (any show featuring a sketch involving Chris Tarrant and a swan definitely has potential!) but it felt like something else was needed to complete the experience. I suspect the best is still to come from these two young promising acts: stronger content coupled with their ability on stage could be a winning formula in the near future.

C Nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Ben Shannon]

Hari Sriskantha: Like Breath On A Mirror (So Comedy)

Hari Sriskantha breaks us into his set by pointing out what we're probably all thinking: how on earth do you pronounce his surname? From then on his personality shines through; self-deprecating and awkward but with an obvious underlying confidence, he shares his ideas on how to live a more meaningful life. At less than forty minutes long, the set is undeniably short, but there are one-liners galore and the whole show is a ringing endorsement for laminated props. While he may not achieve all of his criteria for immortality, Sriskantha's style does feel very promising indeed. He could go far this Fringe - if he can teach enough people how to say his name, that is.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 30 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

Shit-Faced Shakespeare (Magnificent Bastard Productions)

I doubt that when Shakespeare wrote 'The Merchant of Venice' he envisioned it performed by a heavily intoxicated man in a gondola clutching an e-cig, but that's the Fringe for you. The concept of 'Shit-Faced Shakespeare' is simple: a different cast member gets intentionally hammered each night, his classically trained colleagues stay sober, and together they attempt to create a piece of serious theatre. Hilarity ensues as the drunk actor causes all sorts of commotion, while the others are torn between letting the chaos unfold and trying to shepherd him through the play in one piece. I don't really know what actually happened in 'The Merchant of Venice', but who wouldn't forgo education in favour of a good laugh at somebody else's expense?

Underbelly, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

John-Luke Roberts Stdad Up (John-Luke Roberts/PBH's Free Fringe)

The unconventional start to Robert's latest show should serve as a warning for the 50 minutes that follow. The nervous audience gradually settled, though it has to be said that this show won't be for everyone - Roberts isn't tackling an easy subject matter and this isn't your average 'dead dad show'. It is, however, brilliantly performed and it's clear early on how much this show means to him. No two performances will ever be the same, but I did feel by the end that the use of extended repetition was too frequent. A show with many dark questions and a challenging message; it takes a lot of courage to stage a piece that really does 'bare all'.

Voodoo Rooms until 30 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Ben Shannon]

Omar Hamdi: In The Valley Of The Kings (Omar Hamdi)

If Michael Macintyre mated with Russell Brand, I truly believe they would produce Omar Hamdi - fizz, brilliance, introspection, bullshit and all. Hamdi does cover well-trodden territory - it was the third time that day I'd been treated to someone's daddy dilemmas. But he does it refreshingly well, exploring the Egyptian cultural narrative surrounding masculinity and what that means to him - the flamboyant, cosmopolitan son of an emotionless, immigrant engineer. Hamdi's real strength is his ability to be equally funny on fundamentalism and



Aaaand Now For Something Completely Improvised (Racing Minds)

Racing Minds inform us that "anything can happen" in this show and, having witnessed the madness for myself, I can't disagree. Armed with an array of costumes, an imaginary horse and a teapot, the talented improv group crafted a Mexican adventure for this particular audience. Their humour is wickedly fast and intelligent throughout, with the musical accompaniment adapting faultlessly to the obscure plot twists. More audience input may have been fun, but the hastily formed characters took on lives of their own so quickly that perhaps to meddle too much would have ruined the magic. The show will be unique for every audience, but the sheer ingenuity of this group will ensure success and belly laughs day after day.

Pleasance Dome, until 31 Aug. tw rating 5/5 | [Stephanie Gray]

fannies alike. His profiling of the archetypal ISIS recruit was reductive, but I'm nitpicking here. I really shouldn't use that reviewing cliché - "one to watch out for" - but I will, and you should.

Assembly George Square Studios, until 30 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Patrick Galbraith]

Revan And Fennell: Fan Club (Revan And Fennell)

Do you want to have a lot of fun, watching two funny women also having a lot of fun? Revan and Fennell's sketches are joyfully

performed and immediately accessible. Social norms and scenarios are soundly mocked in smartly shaped sketches with satisfying punchlines. In some cases the characters could be developed further, but both comedians perform their parts with infectious glee. The pair have excellent comic chemistry which makes for engaging scenes, and their relationship with the audience is one of trusting camaraderie that cannot be resisted. It will be interesting to see how much further the pair can take their irreverent energy as the run progresses, but this is already an extremely clever and enjoyable show.

C Nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Vicki Baron]



Jimmy McGhie: Winged Goddess Of Victory (CKP)

The bunker at the Pleasance Courtyard is perhaps the ideal space for Jimmy McGhie to play - it's small and intimate enough to showcase his confident ridiculing. Any bigger (and McGhie probably deserves a more sizeable venue) and 'Winged Goddess Of Victory' would risk losing its connection. The comedian uses hilarious anecdotes from his life and his father's as a basis for his comedy, discussing childhood and masculinity, then relates them to his audience by interrogating and poking fun at them. In his fifth solo show he's quite clearly enjoying himself, and the crowd certainly relishes his company. Ultimately, this is the quintessential comedy show from somebody who knows their craft inside out.

Pleasance Courtyard, until 30 Aug. tw rating 5/5 | [Kieran Scott]

DANCE

Sushi Tap Show (Tokyo Tapdo)

Few things are trickier than making fake mistakes, but Tokyo Tapdo can tap and trip with equal panache. In this Japanese comedy tap show, much of the humour relies on a seemingly seamless combination of impeccable footwork and choreographed pratfalls. Highlights include a spoof on Riverdance; an audience-participation lesson on "ribbit" and "oink" in Japanese and an extended film-noir tango - with some fun(ny) use of cups. There is some variation in quality - a few numbers fall flat (and not on purpose this time).

But the seven-year-old in the front row was giggling away, and I definitely left the theatre smiling. It's not listed as a children's show, but it will definitely be a hit with the under twelves.

C, until 30 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Lucy Diver]

Camera Obscura (The Secret Dance Club)

How do you set a lifelong marriage to dance? Ask Lillie Hedderwick Turner and David Layne, whose performances in this show were pitch perfect. The choreography is ghostly, sexy, sad and passionate. The simple but hard-hitting narrative shows an elderly couple remembering their past, as the woman struggles with dementia, which is portrayed with realistic and touching acting. Some of the strongest motifs are drawn from the everyday: she standing on his feet as they dance close and slow. There are some threads left hanging: a child with an unexplained arm cast appears in the danced past but not in the acted present, and the incurable nature of dementia can't be erased from the ending. I left wanting more, and wanting to be in love.

C, until 18 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Lucy Diver]

MUSIC

At The Crossroads (Modern Robot - USA)

Murnau's classic silent film 'Faust', about a medieval pact with the devil, angry villagers

and sticky ends, was a pioneer of big screen horror. Ninety years later there's little that can shock us, but in 1926 this was nastily new. Modern Robot's live drum and electric guitar accompaniment helped me view the often told story anew, by introducing an unexpected harmonic rock element. The sensitively played music softened the story, directing our attention to the very ordinary human frailty highlighted by the actors and effects, without sensationalism or discordant surprises. My overall impression, however, was that this is more a film buff's night out than a music-lover's because, inevitably, the film's the star.

C nova, until 15 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Louise Rodgers]

Tom And The Pennyblacks

In the competitive world of music, it can be an arduous process to get gigs outside of the city that an artist originates in. With Tom And The Pennyblacks, a young indie blues outfit from London, it's mind-boggling that they have managed to make the trip up north. Their gratingly unharmonious collaboration is only worsened by ringleader Thomas Soares' awkward Lou Reed-esque stagecraft. Aside from the bassist Hayden Day's frequent playfulness, the rest of the band appear exceedingly uncomfortable - immersed in their own instruments as if they are unrehearsed. Somewhere in this 45 minute show, there was a question destined to be answered: is this serious or not? Less a project with potential, more a discordant

high school performance.

C, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 1/5 | [Kieran Scott]

THEATRE

Clickbait (The Red Chair Players)

An insightful exploration of the fame - and infamy -

that going viral can bring, this new work speaks directly to contemporary online experience. Kony, ice-bucket challenges and #bringbackourgirls are all referenced in this fictional depiction of a viral phenomenon blowing up around a teenager with a debilitating medical condition. Though there's lots to love in

the confident performances and engaging script, I found the frequent scene changes interrupted the narrative flow. Perhaps that was intentional, reflecting society's consumption of media in vine-sized chunks, but I found it off-putting. Overall, there's something oddly reassuring in seeing a group of teenagers so clearly aware both of the

dangers of the internet and the fundamental flaws in human nature.

C, until 15 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Phantasmagoria (Hookhitch Theatre)

When does reality stop and the story begin? From merely waiting in line I was swept into this tale, which >





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5/5 Promise And Promiscuity: A New Musical By Jane Austen And Penny Ashton (Penash Productions)

I wish I had half as much energy as Penny Ashton! In seventy minutes the multi-talented Kiwi delivers a hilarious take on Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice', full of modern-day twists. I lost count of the number of characters she performs, with each so skilfully and humorously defined. Following Elspeth Slowtree's family and love life, 'Promise and Promiscuity' is full of razor-sharp wit alongside song, dance, and a little bit of ukulele. Craftily placed Austen quotes are woven in with current celebrity and musical references (William Joel's Pianoforte Man was one of my favourites). Austen fans will already know the story, but those who don't frankly needn't bother with the original after seeing this show.

Assembly George Square Studios, until 31 Aug, tw rating 5/5 | [Daisy Malt]

> broke all boundaries of narrative. Charles Alderdice is an extraordinary storyteller, bringing Lewis Carroll's surreal story 'Phantasmagoria' to life in the most imaginative way. I'm still not entirely sure I know what I witnessed, though in the best way possible - stepping into this set feels like entering the subconscious of a most unusual man. Only open to eight people at a time, this short 20 minute performance slips in and out of your life, but will leave you questioning the difference between reality and fiction for a long time afterwards.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Zita Campbell]

The Empire Builders (Theatre Hayal Perdesi - Turkey)

Our pasts are inescapable; they consume us. That is what I took from Theatre Hayal Perdesi's frightening production of Boris Vian's 1959 absurdist drama. The Dupont family live in a nondescript tower block and are always moving, forever followed by "the noise". In each new apartment the same bandaged, nightmarish girl lies on the floor and is mercilessly beaten, whilst her existence is denied to the Dupont child. The brilliantly choreographed performance of the grotesque, writhing figure and the menacing, deranged masculinity of the father are enthralling. This production was one of indefinable excellence, characterised by paranoid energy and nonsense. Though I'm not sure I entirely understood 'The Empire



Valiant (Handan Productions)

'Valiant' is horribly uncomfortable, but in a good way. Offering a thoroughly intense 70 minutes, this verbatim piece is adapted from the interviews of thirteen women about their experiences of war. This show promises, and then delivers, some serious emotional impact. It gives a platform to the often overlooked war-time experiences of women, in countries spanning from Japan to Northern Ireland, from Afghanistan to San Salvador. The four female actors each give strong dramatic performances, particularly in terms of assuming the accents of the women interviewed, and these performances offset one another beautifully. Despite only being a few days into the festival, I already know that I will be pushed to find a theatre show that tops this.

C Nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 5/5 | [Megan Wallace]

encampment kick-starts both the plot - just who is she? - and a number of surprisingly sophisticated debates on the morality of warfare, and the justification of Britain invading a foreign country. The setting may be Napoleonic, but the contemporary parallels are clear to see. It's these blistering exchanges between the Captain and Delilah that really spark on stage, and writer/director Antonia Goddard deserves credit for trusting the audience and leaving subtext as is, resisting the urge to explain everything.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Acts Of Redemption (Unrestricted View)

"A curate's egg" is an expression I've gone my whole life without using, but it seems appropriate to this stylish performance of Ken Jaworowski's 'Acts of Redemption' - it was "excellent in parts". I laughed a lot. Joe Wredde's role as the drunken suburban Romeo, beneath Juliet's window, with a dead dog in a bin bag, was terrific farce. Frustratingly, the opening monologue was the strongest of the six by far - fluffs in those that followed glared in comparison to the seamlessness of the first. 'Pulse' and 'Luck of the Draw' were markedly overshadowed by the emotional wattage Akila Christiano managed in her portrayal of a thirty-something, socialite bitch, who is healed by the redemptive power of love.

Underbelly, until 30 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Patrick Galbraith]

Clairvoyant (Bettine Mackenzie)

"I AM ME!" she cries, desperately. But 'me' is talentless, cringey. Of course, that's the point: 'Clairvoyant' shows us the awkward audition of an aspiring pop star. But, as the title suggests, she has insight into others' minds - and they're much more interesting than her attempts at Madonna. These interludes are solid, self-sustained bits of characterisation: a biscuit incident; Terence the macaw, and a magic trick gone wrong. However, 'Clairvoyant's' trick has gone wrong too: although the apparitions are compelling, it's unclear how they fit into the frame narrative. It comes across as a flimsy premise to link the episodes, and although the cringe and desperation are deliberate, the audience still has to endure it, gyrations and all.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 2/5 | [Lucy Diver]

The Stolen Inches (The Small Things Theatre Company)

An exploration of family, public image and the human psyche, 'The Stolen Inches' demands much of its audience. It's hard at first to understand what exactly is going on, as the concept behind the play is quite complicated: in a bid to project an image of domestic bliss, a TV mogul has permitted a camera crew to interview him and his family. Simultaneously, however, his son is

taking his parents to court on the grounds that their emotional neglect has stunted his growth. Despite this confusion, the actors and the small, intimate set work well together, creating a sense of claustrophobia which evokes the secrets and tensions that hide just below the surface in every family.

C Nova, until 26 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Megan Wallace]

Bortle 8 (Chris Davis)

A one man play about the quest for absolute darkness, 'Bortle 8' takes us on a journey through space, to the depths of the ocean, and into the self. This could easily have been indulgent and pretentious, but amazingly, fantastically, it isn't; there's something disarmingly sincere about writer/performer Chris Davis that keeps things grounded. It's funny and interesting, and seemingly without effort he forges a bond with his audience, so that we're right there with him as he soars through the firmament, climbs up stars, or as he plunges into the Atlantic Ocean. It all builds to a mesmerising climax, a tour-de-force of spoken word rhythms and stream of consciousness wordplay that left me reeling.

Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until 30 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Leask]

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Holly and Ivy

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Builders', I haven't stopped trying to since I left.

C, until 18 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Patrick Galbraith]

The River (Brodrick Productions)

There's nothing particularly bad about 'The River': the performances are solid, the direction clear and the dialogue authentic. It's a tale of a young man who keeps bringing different women to a cabin for a romantic weekend. The action cuts back and forth between two different time frames and we watch these relationships develop and disintegrate in tandem. That's a clever enough device, but it's not servicing any greater theme; the audience is left no wiser about the heart or motivations of the man. Is he callous? Is he damaged? Is he supposed to be emblematic of men in general? Ultimately, it's impossible to know and, sadly, hard to care.

C, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 2/5 | [Andrew Leask]

The Night Watch (Antonia Goddard Productions in association with Jethro Compton Productions)

There's a strong grasp of what makes good drama on display throughout 'The Night Watch': unity of time, place and action, coupled with three complex characters and the resultant interpersonal conflicts. The arrival of a Spaniard in an English army



The School Of Night: Rhapsodes (Extempore Theatre / Something For The Weekend)

Witty and educational to an equally impressive degree, 'The School of Night' is improv at its zany best. Drawing on suggestions from the audience, the Fey Prince and the Word Serpent take us on an hour-long odyssey of form, verse and metre - from 'The Pardoner's Tale' to Pinter, pausing along the way to point out the idiosyncrasies and tropes of different writers. The Fey Prince's ability to amusingly convey Pinter's comedy of menace is a particular highlight. 'The School of Night' feels very organic, where staggering linguistic acrobatics are interspersed with slips and tumbles. The two performers evidently have a contagious passion for literature and this, combined with some quality acting, creates something really special.

C, until 17 Aug.
tw rating 5/5 | [Patrick Galbraith]

Jethro Compton's Frontier Trilogy: Blood Red Moon (Jethro Compton Productions)

The first of Jethro Compton's new trilogy starts with atmospheric, moody lighting and terse dialogue, fraught with tension. After an initial exchange in a chapel - the wooden room in which we sit - there is a slight jolt as the action regresses to a flashback, and we are to take the wooden walls for the wide-open plains of the West. Such feats of imagination are far from rare in theatre, but feel slightly at odds with the ethos of this otherwise immersive, site-specific production. This mild dissonance soon passes, though, as the tale of two brothers and the woman who comes between them unfolds, shot through with classic Western tropes, building to a gripping, satisfying climax.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Jethro Compton's Frontier Trilogy: The Clock Strikes Noon (Jethro Compton Productions)

'The Clock Strikes Noon', the second part of 'The Frontier Trilogy' is a masterclass in ratcheting up tension, and I spent most of the play literally on the edge of my seat. It begins with a classic Western stand off - a weaselly sheriff and

a principled farmer are holed up in a church with a blind priest, surrounded by armed thugs in the pay of the railroad company. The action is cleverly contained within this one space, and as a result the tension slowly increases throughout the play, never fully dissipating even as cracks appear in the characters' morality and ugly violence erupts. The performances are great and the direction exemplary, creating an excellent, intense production.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 5/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Jethro Compton's Frontier Trilogy: The Rattlesnake's Kiss (Jethro Compton Productions)

The past weighs heavily on the characters in this, the final instalment in 'The Frontier Trilogy', and especially on Father Minoa, the blind priest who is the one character common to the whole trilogy. Previously a supporting character, here he steps up to the main role, casting new light on his lines in the other plays. Though the twists and turns of the plot are not really surprising, they are kept engaging through some deceptively simple, yet immersive staging. As things play out to their inevitable, tragic end, the audience can only watch, helpless to alter the tangled, bloody tale of vengeance. This is both a very good play and a fitting conclusion to the



excellent theatrical experience that Compton has crafted.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Andrew Leask]

Jethro Compton presents Sirenica (Jethro Compton Productions)

Not often does a disused attic space become useful in creating

endless ambience for a show. For Jethro Compton's 'Sirenica', set in a lighthouse on the coast of Cornwall, the opening of a creaking door and the wooden staircase up to the room is only the beginning. The room is basic and tiny, yet the audience can't help but stare at the impressive set design that Compton has put together. This Celtic folklore

tale of love, loss and desperation is certainly intriguing, with eloquent acting, but many things are foreseeable when the tension begins to mount. Saying that, 'Sirenica' is maybe trying to fit too much into 40 minutes, and could be something bigger and better.

C nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 4/5 | [Kieran Scott]

Splitfoot (Piper Theatre Productions)

An intimate, minimalistic black set that explodes into all colours, spirits and expressions of humanity. Watch these passionate performers snap their bodies and souls into all vibrancies of the universe. This beautiful piece of physical theatre immerses the audience into the mindset of mid-nineteenth century America, with the tale of the Fox sisters. These three women convinced people that they could talk to the dead, and played an important role in the rise of the spiritualist movement. In this intimate and communal-feeling environment, the cast had their entire audience enthralled. The acting is so demanding, so physical and so real, that the actors themselves seem possessed, further adding to this meta-theatrical and fourth wall-breaking production.

C Nova, until 22 Aug.
tw rating 5/5 | [Zita Campbell]

Cartography (The Lincoln Company)

Quirky, cute and low-key, 'Cartography' offers us a look inside the mind of Sarah, a young woman battling with the loss of her father and the threat of her own premature death from the same heart condition that killed him. The play's intimate cast encourages a high level of audience participation, cleverly establishing an emotional involvement with what's taking place on stage. However, this element of the show, coupled with the occasional musical interludes, can make it feel as if too much is going on at one time. The theme of maps, travelling and cartography highlight the real message of the play; that we all have the power to make our own paths.

C Nova, until 31 Aug.
tw rating 3/5 | [Megan Wallace]

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Some of our favourite Fringe performers share words, thoughts and maybe even some wisdom...

POETRY CORNER

#3 by Clair Whitefield

ThreeWeeks invites Fringe-favourite poets to put some words to paper - or a portable device of their choosing - to entertain you here in Poetry Corner. This time, Clair Whitefield, whose show 'Chopping Chillies' is on at Cowgatehead.

Flyers, a dozen handed to you in less than half a mile
Turn it over in your hand, take a deep breath and smile
That's quite an accomplishment you're holding
Because it's actually quite hard
Distilling live performance onto a piece of A5 card

A show isn't one image, some quotes or a glistening review
A row of black stars supported by a soundbite or two
It's not an elevator pitch written for a commercial goal
Or a string of clichés trying to dodge a pigeon hole
You can't measure its impact in GSM
Or know from the font if it's a turkey or a gem
Or how it'll make feel from the finish: gloss or matte
No, a flyer won't tell you any of that

Ideally I'd tell you about my show via a cosy tete- a- tete
And encourage you to watch it if you haven't seen it yet
I'd buy you a cup of tea and debate with you why mine
-Of all of the shows at Fringe- would be worth your time

But I can't meet you all in person, so I shall tell you in writing:
My show is like the Karate Kid, but with food not fighting
A tale of love, loss, unlikely friendships and second chances
Featuring a martial artist, a naïve chef and an escort who loves samba dances
Their lives intertwine in unexpected ways and one day they all meet
In a tiny cobblers shop in the middle of Camden high street

My flyer is orange, the main picture is of me
Posing with a chilli and smiling cheekily
My brother designed it. If you like it, that's down to him
And I'll thank him too, if you come see the show I'm in

THE SHOW: Chopping Chillies, Cowgatehead, until 29 Aug



John Hinton: Why threes are (scientifically) magic

We like the number three. For obvious reasons. Though let's not forget, three is also the magic number. Do you know who also likes threes? Writer-performer John Hinton, who gives some thought to the rule of three right here, as he completes his award-winning musical 'Scientrilogy' at this year's Fringe.

What's your favourite number? Mine's three. It's definitely one of the prettiest-shaped numbers.

And when you say it, it sounds so...free. And it appears all over the place! An insect will keep three legs on the floor when it walks. Triangles are the strongest architectural shape (which is also why the pelvis is - roughly - triangular). There are trinities in almost all religions, modern and ancient. The building blocks of matter - protons and neutrons - are made of three quarks. Most startlingly, perhaps, we perceive space in exactly three dimensions. 3s, it s33ms, ar3 3v3rywh3r3.

Films work pretty well in threes too - the 'Star Wars', 'Godfather' and 'Lord Of The Rings' trilogies being obvious examples. When 'Star Wars' became six films instead, it lost its lustre. Soon there will be nine 'Star

Wars' films - a trilogy of trilogies - and with any luck the magic of threes will be back at work. I'm crossing three fingers.

There are "rules of three" in many diverse fields: computer programming, economics, witchcraft, and there are loads of rules of three in theatre. Aristotle was the first to identify, 2500 years ago, that plays are made of three parts - a beginning, a middle and an end. Japanese Noh theatre goes further, with its concept of Jo-Ha-Kyu - even the beginning has a beginning, middle and end, as does the beginning of the beginning, and so on, down to every individual beat of the performance. Theatre is made of lots of threes.



Comedy writers are particularly familiar with the Rule Of Three. Jokes work best in three parts – a set-up, a development, and a twist. The “Englishman, Scotsman and Irishman” style of joke is perhaps the most obvious example. Fairy tales are also rammed with threes – Three Pigs, Three Brothers, Three Bears... Three, it seems, is “just right”.

And then, of course, we have fringe festivals. Just look at the title of this very publication! ThreeWeeks. Not one week, not four weeks. Three. Why should this be? When we put on plays at secondary school, we’d usually do three public performances, and there was an unwritten law that the first show would be enthusiastic but inept, the second would be competent but complacent, and that by the third show we’d finally get it right. Perhaps there’s a similar logic to Fringe Festivals being three weeks long – by week three, you’d hope that the piece has swung both ways and is achieved its potential.

So why am I personally so obsessed by the number? Well, because I’ve recently bowed to the pressure and am mining the magic. What

began as a one-off musical comedy about Charles Darwin, which did very well at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2009, and then became two shows (the second being a musical comedy about Albert Einstein, which again did very well in Edinburgh 2013), has inevitably become a trilogy.

The scientist I’ve chosen this time is Marie Curie. She very neatly completes the tripartite division of the sciences – biology (Darwin), physics (Einstein) and chemistry (Curie). She became famous for her work on radioactivity. And how many types of radioactivity are there? Go on, have a guess.

For the three weeks of this year’s Edinburgh Fringe, Tangram shall for the first time be presenting all three “Scientrilogy” shows alongside each other. And we’ll just have to see whether three is indeed the magic number.

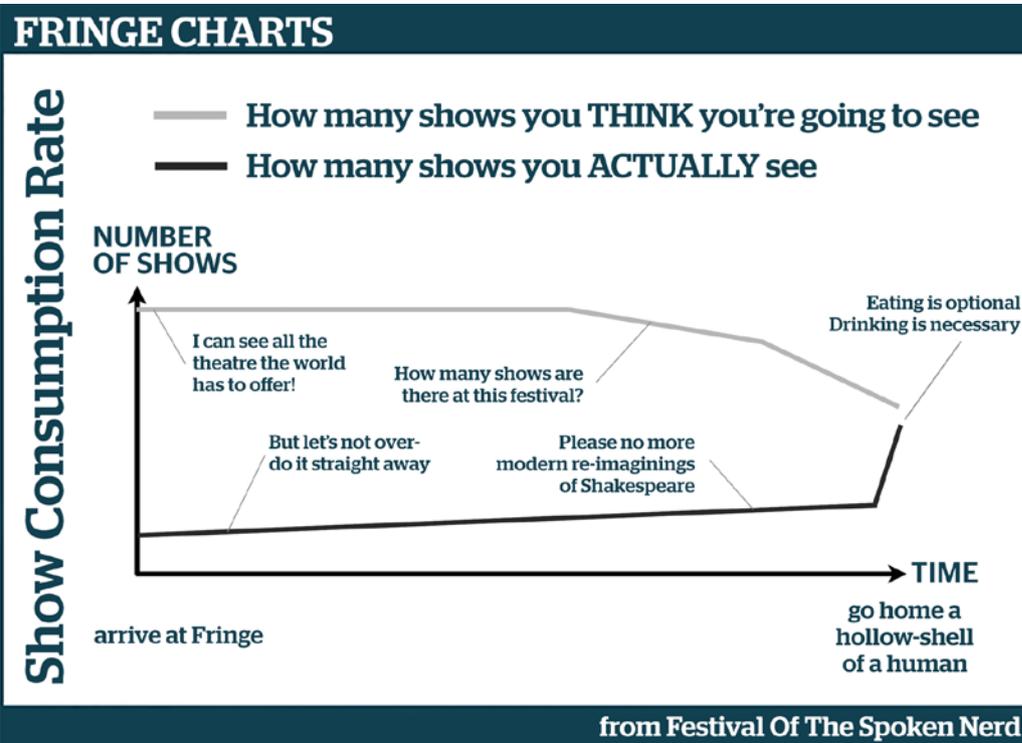
THE SHOWS:

John Hinton’s three shows ‘The Origin of Species...’, ‘Albert Einstein: Relatively Speaking’ and ‘The Element In The Room...’ are all on at Pleasance Courtyard, until 31 Aug at 3:30pm (not 3:33!)

THE LINK: tangramtheatre.co.uk

Festival Of The Spoken Nerd: Fringe Charts

“Science comedy phenomenon” no less, Festival Of The Spoken Nerd are back, and this time “they’re off the chart!” Which got us thinking. What would the Fringe look like in chart form? The comedy nerds have the answer. Look out for their Fringe Charts in each edition of ThreeWeeks this year.



from Festival Of The Spoken Nerd

THE SHOW: Festival Of The Spoken Nerd: Just For Graphs, Assembly George Square, until 30 Aug
THE LINK: festivalofthespokennerd.com

“Friedman is entirely unique and utterly brilliant!” ★★★★★ - *ThreeWeeks*

Dean Friedman

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POETRY CORNER



#4 by Dan Simpson and Oli Forsyth from Stand Up & Slam!

ThreeWeeks invites Fringe-favourite poets to put some words to paper - or a portable device of their choosing - to entertain you here in Poetry Corner. This time, Dan Simpson and Oli Forsyth, the resident poets on the Stand Up & Slam! show

All The Fun of the Fringe

Roll up roll up! Board your train head to Scotland to find your fame three weeks spent in pouring rain the sweat and blood and flying pain.

Your show's a hit - but no one comes two days into your first full run Facebook reads: "I'm having fun!" tearful calls to Dad and Mum.

You've lost your phone, your mind, your money but Three Weeks says: "the show's quite funny" the clouds part: it's suddenly sunny fix your voice with lemon and honey.

You win awards - start feeling fine your queue has grown to quite a line pack up your bags - scrub off the grime tell everyone you're back next time.

THE SHOW: Stand Up & Slam, Cowgatehead, until 31 Aug

ThreeWeeks co-Editor Chris Cooke: Speaking freely this Festival

As ThreeWeeks sets out to cover the Edinburgh Festival for the twentieth consecutive year, co-Founder and co-Editor Chris Cooke is also taking to the stage this August as part of the Fringe's spoken word programme. 'Chris Cooke's Free Speech' is a free speech about free speech, inspired by a session at the music conference Chris produces each May, CMU Insights @ The Great Escape. Here he explains more...

This August, after twenty years of covering the Edinburgh Fringe, I thought it was time to cross the fence and put on a show, and so that's what I'm doing. On just five occasions though, what with August being rather a busy month round here already, but it should be fun. The show is called 'Chris Cooke's Free Speech' and it's a free speech about, well, free speech. Ha, see what I did there?

The idea for all this occurred during last year's Great Escape, when we had a strand looking at misogyny in pop music which climaxed with a debate on the topic 'This House Believes UK

Radio Should Have Banned Blurred Lines'.

It was easy to find some great radio people to speak against the motion, and Sussex University Students' Union, which had actually banned the infamous Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams hit, were up for doing the proposing. But it was really hard to find anyone from within the music or media industry to second the motion. So, I decided to play Devil's Advocate and do it myself. And in doing so I managed to convince myself that radio stations should have indeed banned 'Blurred Lines'.

Which is interesting because Edinburgh University was the first British educational institution to ban the controversial hit on campus, as critics responded to the song's misogynistic lyrics. And here's the thing. I know for certain that had that happened in the 1990s when I was DJing on Edinburgh University's radio station and helping publicise club nights in its students' union, I would have definitely led the campaign against the ban.

After all, free speech is sacrosanct, censorship is never the solution, and America's First Amendment is something to aspire to. So what's changed in the last twenty years, me or the world?

And that's the big question I plan to



ultimately answer in 'Chris Cooke's Free Speech'. Though first I will explain what exactly free speech means under UK and Scottish law, both in principle and in practice, before exploring the various tricky balancing acts that have caused such controversies in recent years, as we try to balance free speech rights with those of privacy, safety and offence. As with all the lectures I do, it will be fact packed, fast moving and, I hope, entertaining.

And it won't cost you a penny to get in (though donations are welcome on the way out to help pay for this adventure). The speech takes place at SpaceTriplex and the Space @ Surgeon's Hall, and although the show is free, it is ticketed. But you can request tickets via my blog or book via the Fringe website. So why not join me for an hour of free speaking, and let's see how many lines we can unblur?

THE SHOW: Chris Cooke's Free Speech, Space Triplex from 14 until 16 Aug, and theSpace @ Surgeons' Hall on 21 and 22 Aug

THE LINK: chriscookesreespeech.com

/spokenword



Juan Vesuvius' Fringe Playlist

We invite Fringe favourites to put together the killer Festival playlist. This week the "Venezuelan DJ idiot responsible for last year's cult hit 'Calypso Nights'" Juan Vesuvius is here with his 'Top Eight Songs For Sexy Three Weeks'.

01 Lordy Shorty - Om Shanti Om

This song, by the title, might seem like a big Hare Krishna ram-jam, but is actually a sweet Caribbean Soca track. Put some rum in your lassi and move de hips!

02 Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush - Don't Give Up

Sometimes you get handed so many flyers you don't know what to do. You don't even know which ones are for your show. Is OK. Let Kate and Peter cuddle you in their bosoms.

03 Queen - Don't Stop Me Now

There is absolutely no type of situation that cannot be made better by this song. Even if you die, and they play this at your funeral, it will be a better funeral.

04 Donovan - Hurdy Gurdy Man

The festival situation can fill up your brains with too much business.

Sometimes you need to make an illegal cigarette and listen to the wiggly sounds in this song.

05 Seal + Adamski - Killer

Everyone knows that the best discos happened in the 90s. If you are feeling all like "Oh my shorts are so boring" then put this one into your ears and up de legs.

06 Quantic - Un Canto a Mi Tierra

Quantic is one of the greatest producers. And now he live in Colombia so the music just get better. Edinburgo can get so cold. This song give the warmth.

07 Mighty Shadow - Dat Soca Boat

OK, so I pretty much made my whole show last year based around this song. But is such a good song. Is no bad thing to reminisce for those good times...

08 Q-Tip - ManWomanBoogie

Festivals can be the romance place. Everyone is so good-looking and full of confidence... is sexy. Q-Tip here explain one type of pairing. There are many types. And just one month. Wow.

Calypso Nights: Juan, Two?, Assembly Roxy, until 30 Aug
Photo by Kat Gollock

The lowdown...

LONGEST ESTABLISHED:

ThreeWeeks is the longest established specialist 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 update, 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.

ALL OVER EDINBURGH:

The ThreeWeeks weekly magazine is available to pick up for free at sites all over Edinburgh during August, with pick-up points in bars, cafes and box offices at all the key festival venues. Meanwhile the preview edition is also delivered direct to homes all over central Edinburgh.

TWO DECADES OF EXPERIENCE:

The ThreeWeeks editors have been covering the Edinburgh Festival for twenty years, and provide their expertise and continued passion for the world's greatest cultural extravaganza each August, interviewing performers, directors and producers, commissioning guest columns, and reporting on key events in the Festival City.

VIBRANT REVIEW TEAM:

This experience is complemented each year by a vibrant young review team who take in hundreds of shows first hand, sharing their opinions in ThreeWeeks, and helping us spot and champion the best new talent.

MEDIA-SKILLS PROGRAMME:

From 1996 to 2013 ThreeWeeks also ran an acclaimed media-skills training programme each summer, providing formal and on-the-ground arts journalism training to hundreds of great young writers, giving future arts and media talent guidance, feedback and unique access to the world's most exciting festival. We are currently redeveloping this programme and hope to relaunch it ahead of Edinburgh Festival 2016.

THREEWEEKS WEEKLY EDITION:

The ThreeWeeks Weekly Edition is our flagship publication, a full-colour tabloid-sized magazine, published weekly during August and packed with reviews, interviews and exclusive columns.

This is the Week One edition of that very magazine! You can pick up your free copy of each issue from all the key venues at the Edinburgh Festival and numerous other places across the city as well.

THREEWEEKS DAILY EDITION

The ThreeWeeks Daily Edition lands in the inbox of thousands and thousands

of Fringe fans every day, in the run up to and during the Festival. It provides all the latest news, interviews, columns and reviews in one place. To sign up for free go to ThreeWeeks.co.uk/signup

THREEWEEKS ONLINE

In addition to the magazine and daily email, there is ThreeWeeks Online. All our features and reviews appear here, plus you can search content by genre and venue. And it's here you will find the ever popular TW Podcast for audio coverage of the Festival.

For updates on new content as it appears online during August, follow ThreeWeeks on Twitter or Facebook, or sign-up for the email updates.

THISWEEK LONDON

Just like ThreeWeeks Edinburgh discovers and champions great shows, performers and new talent at the Edinburgh Festival, ThisWeek London does the same all year round, with a daily helping of Three To See recommendations every day of the year plus the Caro Meets interviews with some of our favourite performers, producers and directors.

ThisWeek London also benefits from the two decades ThreeWeeks has been covering the Edinburgh Festival, tipping Fringe favourites old and new (and brand new) as they appear in London. Check it all out at thisweeklondon.com or sign up for the weekly bulletin at ThisWeekLondon.com/signup.

CREDITS & INFO>

Editors & Publishers:
Chris Cooke and Caro Moses

Commissioning Editor:
Caro Moses

Production & News Editor:
Chris Cooke

Picture Editor: Kat Gollock

Sub Editor: Gemma Scott

Office Manager:
Suzy Moosa

Commercial Manager:
Sam Taylor

Accounts & Admin Manager:
Jason Wolfe

Design Support:
Edward Stone

Founders:
Chris Cooke, Geraint Preston,
Alex Thomson

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Review Team: Vicki Baron, Bruce Blacklaw, Zita Campbell, Lucy Diver, Patrick Galbraith, Stephanie Gray, Bethan Highgate-Betts, Rebecca Jacobsen, Andy Leask, Daisy Malt, Sarah Murphy, David O'Connor, Louise Rodgers, Kieran Scott, Ben Shannon, Jon Stapley, Megan Wallace, Stephanie Withers and Robert Stevens.

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3CM Enterprises Ltd,
Kemp House, 152 City Road,
London EC1V 2NX

Tel: 0131 516 8842

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GET IN TOUCH!

Editorial contact:
TWedinburgh@unlimitedmedia.co.uk

Advertising contact:
TWadvertising@unlimitedmedia.co.uk

News desk: TWnews@unlimitedmedia.co.uk

Complaints: complaints@unlimitedmedia.co.uk

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C the Festival



Monarch Theater Company (USA)
These Troubled Times

5-22 Aug 3.45pm C nova



All the King's Men
**All the King's Men presents:
Radio Gaga**

5-22 Aug 3.20pm C



Theater Margot (Korea)
**The Cherry Orchard:
Beyond the Truth**

5-31 Aug 2.40pm C nova



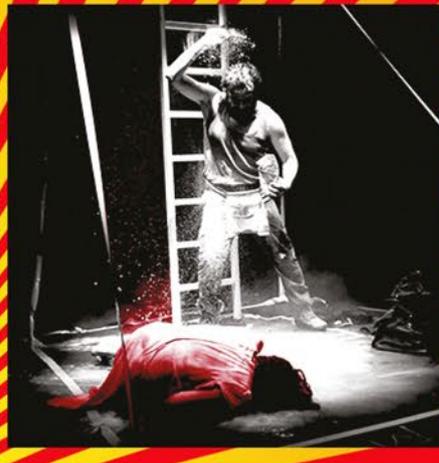
Ryukyu Cirque (Japan)
Clown Macbeth

5-31 Aug 4.00pm C



JSLN Dance Company
(Germany & Singapore)
Transitions of (I)identity

6-31 Aug 1.15pm C south



Theatre Hayal Perdasi (Turkey)
The Empire Builders

5-18 Aug 7.50pm C



Tramp
Confessional

6-31 Aug 7.05pm C cubed



Laboratory Theatre Company
Threesome

19-31 Aug 8.15pm C nova



Hidden Bell Productions
**Mistaken: A Quartet of
Plays for One Actor**

5-31 Aug 8.45pm C nova



Tammer Productions
Mancunian Rhapsody

6-29 Aug 9.45pm C cubed



Papermoon Puppet Theatre (Indonesia)
Mwathirika

15-31 Aug 10.10pm C



Kande (Indonesia)
Aceh Meukondroe

19-31 Aug 7.30pm C

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