

Look Back in Anger
C Soco
7-29 August
(not 15)
19:10 (1h5)



Wobey and Farrell: Well Strung!
Udderbelly's Pasture
7-28 August
15:00 (1h)



Fascinating Aida: Cheap Flights Tour
Pleasance Grand
24 August
20:15 (1h)

EXTRA DATE



The mobile guide
Now on Android too
Get iFringe, it's free!
Reviews, news, advice
Also for iPhone, iPad & iPod Touch
To download iFringe for free
just visit www.iFringe.co.uk

10

festivalmedianetwork

BroadwayBabyReview

Respected Fringe Reviews from BroadwayBaby.com

August 2011

Ashes to Ashes

In The Dust



Zoo Southside. 5-29 Aug (not 11, 17, 23) 16:00 (1h5).

From breaking to pirouettes, In the Dust is an exceptional example of contemporary dance at its finest. Split into three sections of destructive glory, the all-male performers of 2Faced Dance hurl themselves around the stage in a graceful whirlwind of choreographic genius.

The first piece, entitled Subterranea, explores the theme of impending doom and is choreographed by the extremely successful Tom Dale. Motif and development is used to unravel the atmosphere from a state of peace to pandemonium. Circular

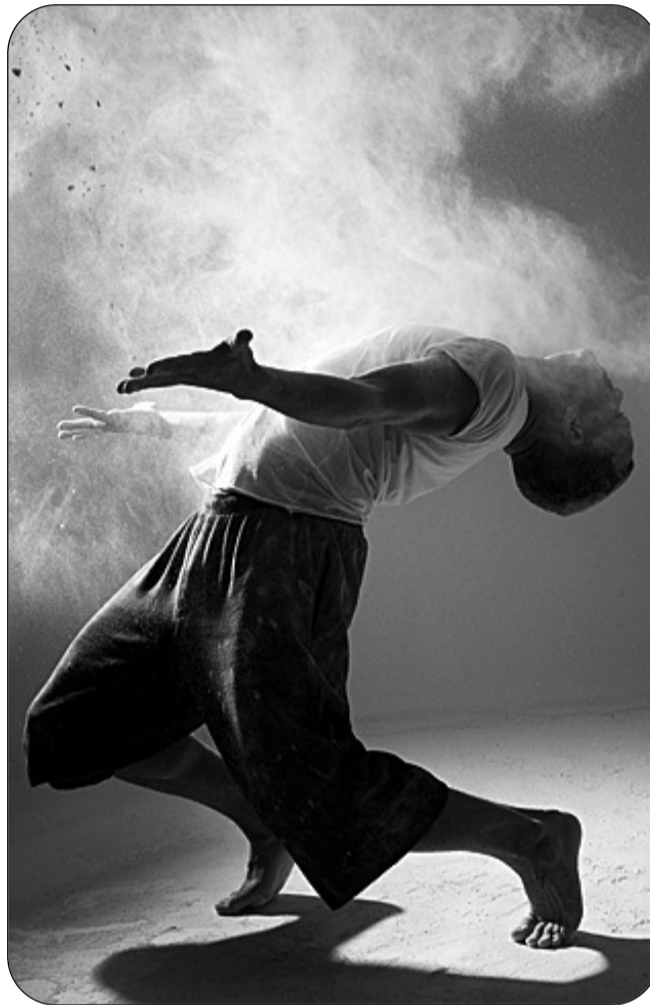
movements, such as barrel leaps and forward rolls, are repeated, expanded and executed in organised chaos whilst core stability that will blow your mind allows the dancers to balance and support each other accordingly.

The second of the three dances, Politicking Oath, assumes an Olympic theme whereby choreographer, Freddie Oppoku-Addaie, has combined a comical commentary with movement inspired by the sporting event. From sequences beginning with a gunshot at the start of a race to a breakdancing freeze-off competition, Oppoku-Addaie really leaves no torch unlit. The trio work both together and individually in an effortless display of choreographed

athleticism, certainly deserving of a gold medal.

Finally, the guys of 2Faced are let loose with stunning movement created by Tamsin Fitzgerald in her Haiti earthquake inspired piece, 7.0. Death, decay and collapsed communities are faced head-on with empathy and contemporary dancing which exceeds modern expectations of a world-class company. Huge credit is also owed to the composer, Alex Baranowski, who brings 7.0 to life with exhilarating music providing endless scope for creativity and drama, worthy of a soundtrack for an Oscar-winning action adventure film.

In the Dust makes contemporary dance accessible to a wide audience, leaving peo-



ple gasping as these talented young men fly through the air. There is a lovely moment in Subterranea which captures the magic I believe 2Faced is all about. The entire company performs in unison with technical accuracy and the pizzazz of street dancing b-boys, yet each dancer stands out individually and is not constrained by

the reins of set choreography. The beauty of technical contemporary training to support flips, freezes and body ripples is highlighted by 2Faced as it enables them to stand out from the competitive crowd of break-dance acts that are body popping their way on to the Fringe scene this year. [Emily Priestnall]



The Hamiltons Five Ways To Survive The Fringe

- 1. Don't Come**
Obvious, but not recommended. We stayed away for two years but suffered serious withdrawal symptoms, misdiagnosed as early-onset-Alzheimers. Edinburgh is Viagra for the mind, body and soul.
- 2. Get a wet-suit**
Edinburgh gets 18.5 inches of rainfall per annum – all of it in August.
- 3. Avoid over-eager flyerers**
If about to be accosted, immediately freeze in a contorted position. You may even make some money as a street performer. But watch out – the accredited ones (who have queued since 08:00 each day for their pitches) will lynch you if you're spotted.

4. Abide by Government Health Warnings
'Sudden alcoholic excess causes rapid rise in blood pressure, increasing your risk of a stroke' So, don't drink before waking up in the morning (unless in an emergency) and, thereafter, drink steadily throughout the day.

5. Come see our show!
A cross between Loose Women, Hi De Hi and Newsnight. It's unscripted anarchy and you'll get to see the Best-Of-The-Fest. The Feel Good factor made flesh!

High Jinks with the Hamiltons. Udderbelly's Pasture, 3-28 Aug (not 15) 12:45 (1h)

Carey Marx: Laziness and Stuff



Gilded Balloon Teviot. 3-28 Aug (not 15) 22:15 (1h)

Laziness and Stuff provides a space within which Carey Marx can comfortably cocoon himself and allow his mind to wander off on lethargic tandems. This is not to say his material is in itself

lazy or tired – far from it. Though he evinces a largely vacant, detached look, Marx is evidently a clever man. You imagine his mind at work in perpetual introspection, trying to make sense of all his thoughts and all his material buzzing around his head, occasionally dipping in and proffering something to the audience, of which not a single member withholds their approval.

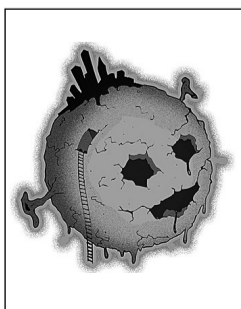
Invariably at his best when

recounting his travels, Marx points out the absurd where we, the mere public, only see mundane minutiae. This is the paragon of observational comedy and the audience are engrossed in his thoughts on lift operators, a prison hotel that warns you when you're safe, and the folly of using binoculars atop the world's tallest building. Marx is incisive, witty and right from the start of the show he forms a strong rapport with the

audience and sets a very high bar. A bar that his material on the human body falls a little short of.

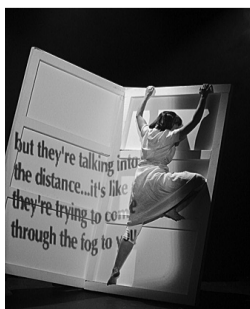
Discussions on male and female genitalia – subjects usually considered a little crass - use up a disproportionate amount of his set time. However, he does keep the material on the right side of crude and within the remit of his title, taking to task those men who refuse to

blame their own laziness for the difficulty of discovering certain female pleasure spots, and the natural, though little-known, phenomena of breathing testicles. At times Marx's glazed-over expression and deep-set eyes make all this seem a little too clinical and a little nauseating. But what does that matter? He hits the spot: the audience are in stitches. [Alexander Blanchard]



Rockertinkler

ZOO Roxy
5-29 August
(not 17)
21:00 (1h10)



Slender Threads

ZOO Roxy
5-28 August
(not 10, 17 & 24)
17:15 (1h)



Muscle

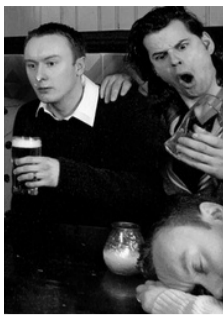
ZOO Roxy
5-29 August
20:00 (1h15)



The Melody Blog

ZOO Roxy
15-27 August
18:30 (1h)





McNeil and Pamphilon: Which One Are You?
Pleasance Dome
 3-28 August
 (not 17)
 17:40 (55m)



What Goes Up
C soco
 3-29 August
 (not 15)
 22:45 (1h)

A Conversation with Carmel



St George's West. 19-28 Aug 14:15 (1h)

A Conversation with Carmel is a dialogue of artistic fusion with a lot to say, and far too many ways of saying it. The production, from Natasha Gilmore's Barrowland Ballet, swings wildly and abruptly from traditional ballet to contemporary dance, from joyous celebration to solemn vigil, incorporating filmed segments and community dance groups in support of its more seasoned core performers. At its best, this show dazzles spectacularly, at its worst it merely fizzles out.

Its premise is to explore old age, its impact on relationships, its effect on memory and perspective, and ultimately its proximity to death. A film of talking head interviews with older people provides the stimulus for a series of routines that centre around a surprise birthday party for Carmel, played exquisitely by MBE-holding dance royalty Diana Payne-Myers. The symbolic relationship between all this is interesting, and has important things to say about the basics of dance as a medium. That dance can be as much of a conversation as verbal interview; that the raucous dance of a birthday celebration can hold some equivalence with a death ritual: these are interesting and inviting notions. Abstractly, they form a far more coherent whole than it seems from the formal experience of the production.

The best sections involve the core company: a family with an interweaving set of relationships, of which Carmel is the oldest - as highly-valued as her young grandchild and almost as dependent on the family unit, something that is structured into the shape of the routines, particularly the lifts. The figure of Carmel and her relationship to the other dancers is perhaps the show's richest element, demonstrating the compatibility of her apparent frailty with both gracefulness and torment.

Yet the production is crowded, if not stifled, from all sides. The film segments are not interesting or well-arranged enough to warrant the extent of their use: unlike the dances, their quality does not stand up on its own merit. The chorus of community members pinched from a social dance group show tremendous spirit, but their energies are not always used by Gilmore as well as they could be - a section of

freeze-frames that represent photographs at the birthday party, for example, has a distinctly GCSE-drama vibe about it. And, at the show's lowest point, a pre-recorded video of senior citizens strutting their stuff to Beyoncé Knowles' 'Crazy in Love' seems so close to YouTube pastiche that it feels wholly estranged from its parent production.

A Conversation with Carmel is still, whatever its problems, hugely likable, and in an arts festival absolutely dominated by the young and male, it presents a refreshingly female-heavy cast that also reminds us of the value of the older performer. Although, ultimately, its many voices may be talking out of sync, it engages us in a conversation more than worth having. *[Tom Moyser]*

Worbey and Farrell: Well Strung



Udderbelly's Pasture. 3-28 Aug (not 15) 15:00 (1h)

Once upon a time, Worbey and Farrell played piano to diners in posh hotels. Sick of their imitable talents being unappreciated, they turned to comedy and it took them under its wing. Now, they perform a pleasing medley of piano and stand-up to more accommodating audiences. The high-octane pair burst onto the stage, seat themselves in front of the grand piano and begin belting out the theme tune to *The Simpsons*. Next thing you know, they're impersonating Jules Holland and Elton John before performing expert renditions of Bach.

Watching Worbey and Farrell tickle and tease the keys is like witnessing an orgy: it's hard to tell where one body begins and another ends, with appendages overlapping and slapping liberally against one another, yet never losing their rhythm. An ability to finger the ivories at lightning-fast speed does not make for comedy gold however, a liberal dose of humour is also required. Thankfully, Worbey and Farrell duly oblige. It's all very slapstick admittedly, the sort of stuff that would have gone down a treat in music halls a century ago.

As vaudevillian as that may be, the pair nevertheless have their moments - mixing a margarita while playing the piano and riding roughshod over classical numbers by seeding them with extracts from *Frosty the Snowman*. Having mastered the art of playing piano in the cartoon style of Tom and Jerry, Worbey and Farrell also bicker

like the pair, hijacking one another's songs while their dextrous digits dance a merry jig across the keys.

While it would be wrong to judge an audience's tastes on the grounds of age alone, this is entertainment for over-fifties. If you've yet to reach that milestone however, it's still a fairly entertaining way to spend an hour. Alternatively, you may prefer to go and see Adam Kay instead. He only plays at half the speed but his songs are twice as funny. The show flags after a while, with Worbey and Farrell seemingly unsure of whether to purport themselves as an all-out comedy act or serious musicians. In spite of their redoubtable talents, do we really need to hear the can-can played at twice the speed of light? There's showmanship and then there's just showing off. *[Kai Sedgewick]*

The Pretender



Underbelly. 4-28 Aug (not 15) 13:45 (1h)

A man is preparing for his wedding day and thanks the audience for responding to his ad looking for wedding guests. He begins to tell us the story of his life from his childhood until the present day through short monologues, projected films and pieces of physical theatre. He uncovers the horrifying truths and creates a disturbing sense of unease as the boundaries between fact and fiction begin to blur.

At first, *The Pretender* seems to be stand-up comedy: the tribulations of an unprepared groom on his wedding day. This quickly falls apart as 'the pretender' starts to perform a physical theatre interpretation of the morning of his wedding day. The movement is completely out of the blue, and unfortunately, the actor's physical capability is not developed enough to stop the movement from looking clunky and contrived. He also interacts with some of the projected footage but, again, although we understand how it is supposed to look and feel, the execution fails to live up to the ideas.

The redeeming feature of the show is some of the films projected onto the wall behind the performer which he doesn't interact with, in particular 'My Childhood'. They are moving and, although quite abstract, make perfect sense to those willing to apply some thought-power.

It is difficult to decipher whether *The Pretender* is supposed to be silly or deeply pro-

festiva.lmedianetwork MEDIA AT THE FRINGE DEBATE

Find out about the Festival Media Network's activities from the last 12 months, plus discuss the role of independent review media at the Edinburgh Fringe, and how performers, publicists and the press can better work together. If you have any specific questions to ask of FMN or individual member media, or topics you would like to discuss, email them to debate@festivalmedianetwork.com by Wednesday at 5pm.

SpaceCabaret (Venue 54), North Bridge
 Thursday 25 August at 11.30am. Admission is free.

found; certainly there are moments which are one or the other. The result is that the performance becomes confused and we start to resent the performer more than feel for him. This is not helped by his wooden delivery and awkward stage presence. I did not care about his wife, his aspirations or his lies.

This piece definitely needs cleaning up around the edges. If you are curious about it, go and make your own decision as I feel like this is a play that is going to split opinion. *[Stephanie Bartlett]*

Alchemystorium



Bedlam Theatre. 15-27 Aug 16:30 (1h)

I feel a little drained after seeing this show but in the best possible way. Because it's very rare for a show to have you howling with laughter and then in tears within the space of five minutes. But this show does it, without a single piece of speech.

The *Alchemystorium* is magical from the very first moment when the trolley-sized box on stage unfolds into a huge, stage-spanning set complete with three very talented physical performers. The title, it turns out, refers to a coffee shop of sorts where the staff of three caters to the audience, making them a brew and snapping their picture to go with it. At first, the show is just this physical clowning and this in itself is very impressive. The cast are such talented comedians that every movement raises a giggle or, in the case of the boy next to me, keeps the audience in hysterics for minutes at a time.

Soon though, two of the characters start falling for each other, leaving the odd one out a lonely third wheel. What follows is a beautiful, delicate story of love found and love lost, packed with delightful little moments. The nervous couple, unsure of how to woo each other, act out the entire performance through a couple of hempen puppets before repeating the story themselves. The lone character remembers the man she loved and never saw again. And when the pain gets too much she leaves to find him. Every one of these moments is invested with a delicate, sweet simplicity. And every so often, the goonish expression on one of the clowns' faces falls away to show the joy inside.

This is a lovely little piece of theatre. For those of us feeling the loneliness of singledom, it offers hope of new love. For

those recently coupled up, it celebrates this happiness. For those who are in love for the long run, it reminds them of the joy and peace that finding that special someone brings. It reminds us that no matter how far we go, we always come home and, no matter how long we're apart, the ones we love will always find us again.

What Gomito Theatre have created with *The Alchemystorium* is truly extraordinary. This is a beautiful, perfect gem of a show. Compulsory viewing for anyone who's ever loved or lost. *[Tom King]*

Pip Utton is Charles Dickens



St George's West. 5-29 Aug (not 24) 13:30 (1h15)

After falling down dead, Charles Dickens - like a phoenix with an unusually large beard - rises miraculously from the ashes to tell us the story of the last decade of his life. Pip Utton, the 'doyen of the Fringe one man show', who gained acclaim sporting even more sinister facial hair in the award-winning *Adolf*, returns to the Fringe with something altogether less controversial.

Impeccably acted, Utton's Dickens effortlessly commands the stage from the outset, punctuating his personal reflections with readings from his own work, as performed on the lecture tours he gave during his final 12 years. These range from the instantly recognisable Bob Cratchett to the somewhat more obscure Mrs Gamp from *Martin Chuzzlewit*, with Utton bringing every character to life with aplomb.

Unfortunately though, the life of Charles Dickens - or, at least, what we are told of it - is simply not engaging enough to make for a memorable show. Apart from the details of his domestic arrangements and the strength of his affection for his mistress, Nell, we receive a disappointingly limited portrait of his existence, with reflections on his difficult childhood cut woefully short. There is none of the emotional complexity of Utton's previous writing, with few real insights into the revelation of his fixation with material gain. Though the show is undoubtedly well-performed, the readings are the only points at which we are truly moved, and the absence of any connecting thread running through the chosen excerpts makes it feel slightly disjointed overall. What's more, written from the perspective of the modern day -

complete with anachronistic expressions and a reference to DVDs - the script doesn't sit comfortably with the identity of the protagonist, and in consequence, the concept of the show doesn't really work.

Go and see it for the joy of hearing a wonderful actor take on Dickens' captivating prose, but don't be disappointed if it doesn't live up to expectations as a whole. *[Eleanor Lischka]*

Four Sad Faces, Suddenly



The Canons' Gait. 6-28 Aug. 13:15 (55m)

When the only woman of the four brought out a loaf of sliced bread, I have to say I did predict the oncoming joke. However, it didn't stop the laughter and brought the house down as a sarcastic revelation emerged that there are, in fact, numerous things far greater than the slight time-reducing factor of having pre-sliced bread. This is just one of many witty sketches that prevented any sad faces in the audience.

It's fresh, it's funny and it's free. *Four Sad Faces* is an entertaining comedy sketch show at the Canon's Gait with some side-splittingly funny moments and others that will keep you chuckling until the next moment of hilarity. These four not so sad faces certainly have a level of professionalism worthy of a few bob as sketches are exceedingly well rehearsed and are improved and repeated in a cleverly devised cyclic nature. However, it can sometimes become tiresome as the group have perhaps too many characters and it requires a high state of concentration to appreciate the full effect of the jokes. This doesn't detract too much from the enjoyment of the performance though and it is the nature of a quick fire sketch show.

There are hundreds of shows at the Fringe that will cost a lot more than the *Four Sad Faces* and they won't be half as funny. This foursome of comics are deserving of a full audience everyday with characters such as a television chef and a chick lit author and you will leave the Canon's Gait rather merry. If this quartet are back on the Fringe scene next year I hope they cut a couple of the sketches, focus more on the characters that work brilliantly and demand themselves a ticketed show. *Four sad faces* will, without a shadow of a doubt, turn your frown upside down. *[Emily Priestnall]*

Catch up on our reviews on the move

GET IT FREE for Android, iPhone, iPad & iPod touch www.iFringe.co.uk

advertising enquires: advertising@broadwaybaby.com
www.broadwaybaby.com

BroadwayBabyReview

Published by Web Editors Ltd. Registered in England and Wales No. 6257678. Printed by Edinburgh Copyshop. 62 St. Mary's Street, E.H. 15X. 0131 556 6100. Broadway Baby is a member of the Festival Media Network.