Zoe Lyons
Pop-up comedy queen

Jo Caulfield & Monica Bauer
write for SCOTSGAY

Glenn Chandler
creator of ‘Taggart’ talks to Andrew Doyle about ‘Sandel’

Stuart Duffy
reports from ‘T in the Park’

Aaron Twitchen
Desperately Seeking the Exit
Forever 27
Gay Straight Alliance
Ginge, Geordie and the Geek
The G-Spot
It Goes Without Saying
Knees-Up Round the Organ
Ladyboys of Bangkok
Mitch Benn
Paul Foot
SingleMarriedGirl
Susan Calman
Susie McCabe

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Australian Michael Griffiths IS Madonna. As you’ve never seen or heard her before.

Songs by Madonna

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY DEAN BRYANT - LIZA (ON AN E)

SEASON
£10 full price, £8 conc.
8th, 9th, 15th, 16th, 17th
August 2013 - 9pm

BOOKINGS
www.edfringe.com
0131 226 0000
(Booking fees apply)

VENUE
The Boards
Edinburgh Playhouse
18-22 Greenside Pl

A border line religious experience. -Time Out

Griffiths is a rare and wonderful performer. -Artsub

Exceedingly Funny - Adelaide Advertiser

Sheds new light on Madonna’s songs. -Harass Sun

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this 8-piece group. Having played King Tuts in Glasgow and going by the reception they received from the TITP crowd, we’ll be hearing big things about Lucy Spraggan’s first trip to Kinross though, as she graced the T Break stage on Sat with a set which introduced her fans to some of her chart hits “How Ya Doin?” and “Change Your Life”. There’s still plenty life in the X Factor winners yet and the crowds enjoyed an up-beat set from Perrie, Jade, Leigh-Anne and Jesy.

Later as the mercury continued to hit the high 70’s, it was Rita Ora who ran onto the Main Stage for an afternoon of fun. She immediately lifted the crowd, everyone was bouncing and jumping around singing along to “RIP” and “Hot Right Now”. Even in the exhausting heat, she managed to dance and sing (along with some rather hot dancers whose numbers we don’t seem to have!) plus had time to get down to the crowd in the pit and greet the fans waiting in the sun. I’d say she had a ball up there and we all did too just watching her - she was infectious!

After cooling off in the log flumes at the funfair (which seems to get bigger every year) and after a £6 burger (!) it was time for the big decision of Sun - The Killers or David Guetta? Opting for David Guetta it was a struggle to make it all the way to the front but well worth the bruised elbows. Looking back across the thousands of heads, it seemed the majority of the 85,000 ticket holders were here for Guetta but I’m sure a few stayed to watch The Killers on the Main Stage too. This stage was just incredible though. An outstanding set, with stunning lights and graphics which were timed perfectly with the changes in styles and tempos from Guetta. The crowd seemed to be constantly bouncing and of course the traditional “Here we go...Here we go...Here we go!” chant was used time and time again, even by the Frenchman himself, but it seemed to display just how much everyone appreciated the music and the show. A cheeky insert using Avicii’s brand new “Wake Me Up” gave the crowd a massive lift and the place almost erupted. The lasers and fireworks to end the show put Guetta at the top amongst one of my personal favourite festival moments and I’m glad it happened at TITP.

Overall the festival seems to have been a huge success yet again, with low numbers of arrests for relatively minor issues. People seemed to heed the very high profile drug warnings in the light of the recent spate of drug deaths in Scotland which is also positive. The festival must be an enormous boost to the local community for a few days, but still reckon T in the Park is something Scotland can be very proud of. To me it reflects the diverse range of musical tastes in our country and has something for everyone over the full weekend. The whole experience is something you just have to do at some point. Long Live TITP and here’s to another 20 years!
Here we go with another round up of news from across this wee corner of Scotland. This month includes Cheerz goes all out for entertainment, Rainbow Day in Aberdeen and GMH on the hunt for volunteers.

Starting first on the scene at Cheerz, they have just announced a great line up of entertainment including some that you asked for via @cheerztweet on twitter. Fri 9th Aug sees Kerry getting a babysitter for her kids and nipping down Primark for an outfit before devouring a few Iceland prawn rings and getting on stage with the Queens of Pop in Cheerz Club. The Queens of Pop have been a youtube sensation for a while now and this is a night not to be missed. The week before you will find X Factor's Ruth Lorenzo in Cheerz Club, another act that they have been asked for many a time, and on 16th Aug in Cheerz Bar you will find the amazing drag act Dave Lynn as seen on the film Beautiful Thing amongst many other things! Cheerz really does take on board what people want so why not tweet them or send a message on facebook asking for what you want whether it be a theme night and act or if you want to host your own event in the club area. Also Cheers Steve for the bubbles and to Cherry and Scarlett for a great show a few Sundays ago, the crowd seemed to really enjoy the show so a huge well done and thank you!

On Sat 21st Sep there is going to be an LGBT+ Family & Friends event from 2pm to 5pm at Union Terrace Gardens. This aims to be a regular event designed to foster good relations and provide a social focus for LGBT+ people, family and friends. If you are interested in participating in the event, making a contribution, holding a stall or sponsoring an activity like the staging for a band or face paints for children etc please get in touch with Alan Cowan: ACowan@grec.co.uk At GMH in Grampian it’s volunteer recruitment drive time. They are looking for volunteers for everything from outreach to media production. If you or anyone you know are interested and think that you would make a good member of the team then recruit, recruit, recruit. For more information e-mail: grampian@gmh.org.uk or head over to gmh.org.uk/volunteer.

As well as looking for volunteers the guys at GMH have been very busy producing some videos on STI’s to help keep you informed and healthy! To see these head over to facebook.com/gmhscotland and the team would also like your feedback on the videos and any service you may have used via facebook or @gmhscotland on twitter.

Zone Youth is now fully managed and supported by Aberdeen City Council and can be contacted via e-mail: zoneyouth@aberdeencity.gov.uk or to contact a worker direct it’s zoneyouth@a-watson.com and ehepburn@aberdeencity.gov.uk the next group meeting is on Sat 10th Aug please e-mail for venue details or look out on facebook.com/zoneyouthlgbt or @zoneyouthlgbt on twitter.

That’s it for another month from this wee corner! If you have any news, views, gossip, photos get in touch with me via e-mail or @andiabz on twitter.

Andy Watson

@scotsgay.co.uk
Nathan Sparling

For full details on all Glasgow venues and emporia see the inside back page.

For the most comprehensive up to date listings go to scotsgay.co.uk/listings/venues

The Court Bar and have benefitted from having outdoor seating in this sweltering heat. The Court recently hosted Pride On The Clyde which was a massive success of a boat party, followed by a big after party in the Polo Lounge! They still play host to the Karaoke legend Audrey Hepburn so make sure you get in and check them out!

The Gallery have also been buzzing and have just launched a new series of Cocktail Pitchers at only £4.95, and they are strong too! They’re still keeping with live sports and live entertainment every weekend, so if you’re not visited this new and exciting bar, make sure you get in there.

The scene has been buzzing over July as well! Speakeasy have got their new line up well and truly underway, although I must write some corrections! DJ Darren Dorn is spinning the tunes and bringing his own style to Sun nights in Speakeasy, whilst DJ Shazoo is providing your music for a Thu night. Professional singer and karaoke host Kris is joining the team to provide a Wed night Karaoke experience! Get in and check them all out.

If you go down some stairs today you’ll be in for a great night! Not quite the nursery rhyme but Underground is the place to be with drag star Bee Fierce, great bar staff with a high standard of service and DJ Mark too! It’s a great atmosphere, good quality drinks and some great people. Check it out sometime soon. You’ll be sure to check out AXM and The Polo Lounge this summer; with lots of nights out and jam between them. Until next time, enjoy Glasgow, enjoy Pride and get through to see some of the Fringe in Edinburgh!

How to protect your partner from losing the house

? Do you know how to make sure your partner won’t be thrown out of the house if you die?

? Do you think a Cohabitation Agreement might help you?

? Have you considered making a Power of Attorney to have someone look after your affairs if you’re not able?

If these issues affect you, get in touch with Donald Skinner-Reid at MHD now.

At MHD we have an award winning team of experts in all aspects of Family Law ready to help you. Call Donald now on 0131 555 0616 or email donald.skinnerreid@mhdlaw.co.uk

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Be sure to check out AXM and The Polo Lounge this summer. Enjoy Glasgow Pride!

Glasgow

It’s the month of sun, visits to the beach, cold beer and of course Pride Glasgow! The team over at Pride HQ have been in full steam ahead work mode and what great things they’ve got in store for us. The headline act which was announced last month, is going to make you feel proud - it’s Heather Small of Mt People fame!

YouTube sensations Queens Of Pop will join BGT boy Jordan O’Keefe on the AXM Main Stage, alongside The Voice’s Melanie Masson. Local duo Robert & May Miller will draw a massive crowd for their massive voices and talent, who’ll round off a great local bunch of local acts which include the amazing comedian Scott Agerow and drag sensation Bee Fierce Beaumbies.

Pride are also bringing new boys Supernova and Rewind, two boy bands which are both pleasing on the eyes and ears! Sam Callahan returns to Glasgow as well for Pride, he recently performed at AXM’s Ginger night, and is another feast for the eyes! Hosting the AXM Main Stage is of course Cherri Triefel, the stalwart drag legend, alongside her partner in crime, Capital FM DJ Grant Thomson. DJing on the stage in between acts will be the star in hot pants DJ Marc of Underground fame!!

Another great thing about Pride is the parade, and boy is this parade a great route. The team at Pride Glasgow HQ have pulled a great parade route out the bag, circling the City Centre and letting the people of Glasgow see how wonderful us gay boys really are.

Remember, Pride isn’t just about having a good time, there is a real message behind Pride, why we have it and why we march. It’s about showing that we should stand up against victimisation and is for people of all ages, shapes and sexualities!

John Here writes: Just in case you’re wondering why there hasn’t been an ad in ScotsGay for Pride Glasgow, we promised them free space and that nice Mr Smith promised to send the artwork, but despite pestering phone calls and considerable internet prodding, he seems to have been too busy to get round to it. Next year perhaps?

The buzz around the scene this month has definitely been around John Street and the new Katie’s Bar. They’ve launched a great line up of entertainment and a great opening weekend with legend Kim Wilde with support from boyband Rewind, pop sensation Ryan Magg & local talent Mama’s Baby over a great weekend with the host, of course, Nancy Clench! Glam-e-oke, Katie’s take on Karaoke with a twist is every Wed with cabaret star Christine Doir, and Nancy Clench joins the weekly lineup on more than one occasion!
SUMMER HAS ARRIVED!

Special Summer Cocktail Buckets From £7.50
Cocktail of the Week £4.50
1,2,3 Branded Drinks Promotion all Weekend
Shots from £1
Bottles from £2 & Pints from £3

COMING SOON!
Revised Rainbow Promos to give even more value promotions 7 days a week!

SUNDAYS FROM 4PM
Karaoke with Titty Galore & Fredstar
House Spirits & Dash from £1!
(inc Russian Standard & Gordons Gin)

OPEN UNTIL 3AM STARTING 1ST WEEK IN AUGUST
With so much stuff to get through, I’m just going to get right to it. In issue 1 of SGfringe we were delighted to have one of television’s greatest dramatists, Glenn Chandler, writing for us. On page 20 of this edition he talks to playwright and comic Andrew Doyle about creating Taggart and this year’s controversial Fringe shows, Sandel and Killers.

Monica Bauer is an American playwright of tremendous quality. Her show, Made For Each Other, was the strongest piece of new theatre that I saw on the Fringe last year. As you might imagine, I’m very much looking forward to seeing her new work, The Year I was Gifted. Monica shares what she learned from a legendary film-maker and how it inspired her on page 28.

We packed the bags of Planet’s Cilla Slack and sent her to Manchester to track down The Lady Boys of Bangkok. On page 14 she goes behind the scenes with the most famous show of its kind in the world.

Jo Caulfield is an Edinburgh based stand up comedian with TV credits to rival anyone. She doesn’t have her own Fringe show this year so I’m delighted to have her moonlighting as a columnist. Check out what Jo recommends on page 17. Her new radio show, JoCaulfield’s Speakeasy, starts a four week run on BBC Radio 4 from Sun 4th Aug. And that’s a lot of fours for one sentence.

Jo joins a team of five women and five men who will be out and about reviewing shows this Fringe. I warmly welcome to the team Anne Francis, Carrie Gooch, Delphine Dallison, Mary Woodward, RM Ballantyne and Steven Stewart. And I welcome back Josh Hepple and Tony Challis, as well as ScotsGay editor John Hein - who will maybe see a dozen shows before he disappears off to a beer festival.

Regular readers of this fine organ will wonder where our own Brett Herriot has got to. His usual Edinburgh and Arts column inches have been replaced by this Fringe supplement. Well, he’s joining the cast of the Fringe show Rent (see page 31 for a special Rent offer to all ScotsGay readers) as well as reviewing for our media partners Broadway Baby. But he’ll be back with us as usual once all this festival nonsense is over. For more on Rent check out our website sgfringe.com. Brett did ask me to give a special mention to our own Edinburgh gay bars, who are doing their bit this Fringe. Leading the way are The New Town Bar and The Street - both of which are official Fringe venues. Their shows form part of our Sixty of the Best Fringe recommendations on the centre pages. If 60 sounds like too many to get through, we’ve also launched a special edition of the Fringe shows Rent. Most of the Guest Reviewers have put together a special Rent offer to all ScotsGay readers as well as reviewing for our media partners Broadway Baby. But for one of the festival nones to see, see page 31 for a special Rent offer to all ScotsGay readers.

The biggest names are right here. Zoe Lyons (page 18), Susan Calman (page 26), Mitch Benn (page 29) and Paul Foot (page 33) are all television and radio regulars. Meanwhile, The Ginge, The Geordie and The Geek (page 36) are a sketch group you’re going to hear more from as they’ve just finished filming their first BBC2 series. We also introduce you to an American artist with a very special Scottish connection, Bill Bowers (page 30), the popular blogger and SingleMarriedGirl (yes, all one word you subs!) Heather Bagnal (page 31), a comedian who performs in the famous Stonewall Inn in New York, Veronica Elizabeth (page 32), and one of the greatest cabaret performers of his generation, Mister Meredith (page 28). And if that isn’t enough you’ll meet Peter Michael Marino, who really did put together a four million pound musical with Debbie Harry and Madonna (page 35). And if that still isn’t enough check out Aaron Twitchen (page 37). He’s buff and really really good looking. And funny to boot!

You can also read all this stuff, plus all the interviews and reviews from the other editions of SGfringe at sgfringe.com. Phew!

Martin Walker
Back in May, during an interview with The Scotsman Magazine, Miss Cilla Slack divulged that The Lady Boys of Bangkok had been a huge inspiration to her. So ahead of their new Scottish tour, Glamorous Amorous! we sent PLANET BAR’s hostess with the mostest behind the scenes of the international cabaret institution.

Every year I wait in anticipation to see what wonderful surprises and show-stopping performances the cast of The Ladyboys of Bangkok will provide, at the No.1 show to see at the Edinburgh Fringe.

The show has evolved again this year, and captured a diverse range of characters. Miss Ole, who has a number of new comedy/traditional songs which seduce the audience and have them on the edge of their seats hoping to evade her attention as she works the room. The amazing Miss Jojo again overawe and stuns with a brand new routine featuring her half-man, half-woman song. This is a regular feature of her act, and this year’s version is one of the best I have ever seen. I won’t spoil the surprise by telling you what that is possible to any show you could go and see in London’s West End.

The choreography is seamless, the costumes are outstanding and the Kathoey performers are simply beautiful. Kathoey means transgender or effeminate gay male, and the Ladyboys are recognised as part of a third gender in Thailand.

The song on the cake was Miss Jacqueline’s tribute to Whitney Houston! It made the hairs on the back of my hand stand on end, and earned a standing ovation. That was in Manchester so I can’t wait to see the reaction they get in Edinburgh – their second home. They know how to throw a party!!

Thanks to John Newton for helping Cilla with the words and Taylor Crocket for the photography.

Scottish Dates
Aberdeen: Sabai Pavilion
Edinburgh Fringe Festival: Sabai Pavilion
Edinburgh: 29-31 July
Ayr: Civicd Leisure Centre 30th Aug
Perth: Concert Hall 31st Aug
Queen’s: Caird Hall 1st Sep
Glasgow: Clyde Auditorium 2nd Sep

NAME?: Ekwarin Kamchang (in Thai my name means like Beautiful Flower, a Lotus)
NICK NAME?: Sak (Head of the Group)
MY ROLE HERE?: I need to bring the audience very special memories to take away from the show with them.
MOST OUTRAGEOUS / FUNNY PERFORMER?: Oak by far. He makes people have great fun and laugh and gives the audience very special memories to take away from the show with them.

NAME?: Surasak Suthajinda
NICK NAME?: Pak (in Thai my name means like Beautiful Flower, a Lotus)
MY ROLE HERE?: I need to bring the audience very special memories to take away from the show with them.
MOST OUTRAGEOUS / FUNNY PERFORMER?: Oak by far. He makes people have great fun and laugh and gives the audience very special memories to take away from the show with them.

NAME?: Ok (in Thai my name means like Beautiful Flower, a Lotus)
NICK NAME?: Pak (Head of the Group)
MY ROLE HERE?: I am a true performer from my heart. I am the one that I love to present myself and to perform, I help design the costumes. After every tour in the UK we all return to the Mambob Cabaret Show and perform alongside the other 50 or more lady boys there. We then plan and put together the new songs / costumes and prepare for the tour in the UK.

NAME?: Jacqueline (9 Years in Show)
FAVOURITE SONG TO PERFORM?: I am a very powerful performer, and my style is very sexy and natural. I want to be like a real show girl and be centre stage.

NAME?: Jennifer Hudson
NICK NAME?: Pak (Head of the Group)
FAVOURITE SONG TO PERFORM?: Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey... but when I started the show I felt more like Rihanna, I’m told I am sexy and people always think I’m a very bad girl.

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Y

ES - it's time for the most expensive arts festival in the world! Sorry, I mean its time for the most exciting arts festival in the world.

I'm not doing a solo show this year, I've been busy recording my new Speakeasy Radio series, but I will be hosting the Barnardo's Big Comedy Benefit (Assembly Rooms), and presenting some Amnesty International Secret Comedy Podcasts (Underbelly).

That's me to a fault - give, give, give. I just hope if I ever win the Lottery I won't be mean and nasty to the little people. Like I am now.

This year's Festival brochure is bigger than ever. Every July I say the same thing: give me the brochure, a marker-pen and a glass of wine - and you can stick the brochure and the marker-pen up your arse.

A quick glance through the aforementioned catalogue shows a thousand comedians air-brushed within an inch of their lives. Come on, who doesn't like being touched up by a graphic designer? I know I do.

The Festival is all about self-publicity for comedians. Last year I had 500 posters distributed throughout our flat (she drinks wine), and I felt like a star - until I saw a drunken man urinating on my face outside the Gilded Balloon. I'm no Diva but that put a real dampener on my Lady Gaga moment.

Anyway…

I notice Gyles Brandreth will be in town. But don't let that put you off, there's still plenty of shows worth going to see. It's certainly an eclectic programme, from the premier of a new work by US experimental performance artist Laurie Anderson (Usher Hall), to the wonderfully puerile humor of local sketch group The Colour Ham (The Caves). I saw The Colour Ham's preview show last month. Their grand finale, three men rolling around the stage half-naked, complete with a fake extendable penis, is not easily forgotten.

So which shows am I particularly looking forward to?

Lucy Porter (she drinks wine), Susan Calman (she drinks beer) and Janey Godley (she's teetotal) are all on my list. Although I won't be attending Janey's after-show party. Unless Lucy and Susan are there and they bring a carryout.

Phil ‘the old luvvie’ Jupitus and Hal ‘the young luvvie’ Cruttenden are starring in Making News (Pleasance). Written by the people behind last year's Coalition play, I can safely say this is going to be one of The fringe's hot tickets.

I'll definitely be catching cabaret duo The Creative Martyrs. Like a demented cross between Jacques Brel and Laurel & Hardy, they're intelligent, subversive, and funny. I've seen their last three fringe shows, and this year's show-slash-therapy session featuring comedians and raconteurs talking about the worst experiences of their lives.

Speaking of worst experiences I see everyone's favourite attention-seeking disgraced Conservatives, The Hamilton's, are back in Edinburgh. In a similar vein to Amazon Recommendations, I'd say if you enjoy The Hamilton's you'd probably also enjoy watching a manky flea-ridden dog taking a big dump in a badly lit car park.

If you want to ruin a perfectly good suede jacket why not take a trip to the Voodoo Rooms? Go see Scott Capurro (Usher Hall), to the Voodoo Rooms are decadent, exotic and glamorous. It's like doing a show inside Elizabeth Taylor's vagina. Great acoustics.

So do you like magic and mind-reading? Stupid word is 'off'. Actually Doug is very funny and his mind! I'm thinking of two words, and the second word is 'off'. Actually Doug is very funny and his shows are genuinely enjoyable.

If you can't get a ticket to the Lady Boys of Bangkok, my good friend, comedian Alistair Binnie is at The Drama House. There's not as many costume changes as the Lady Boys, but there's lots of laughs.

Scottish comedian JoJo Sutherland is running daily shows The G-Spot at the New Town Bar. A selection of the fringe's finest comedians and the chance of some casual sex in the toilets! That's a win-win.
Zoe Lyons: Pop-up Comic is at The Assembly Rooms at 5pm 2-24 Aug (not 11). For tickets go to airfringe.com or tel: 0845 653 3008. ZoeLyons.co.uk

Zoe Lyons - Pop-up Comic

So what is a pop-up comic? A Pop-up Comic is one that sometimes appears in places where it shouldn’t, or you wouldn’t expect it to. Amongst other things, I talk about some ill though out TV appearances in the show where I have “popped up” on the last day or so. The pop up establishment is enjoying a bit of a boom at the moment, like the spontaneity of having a restaurant where there wasn’t one yesterday, or a shop pop up in a disused space. Pop Up are two words at fit really well together, it’s like a verbal bubble gum.

How many Edinburgh Fringe shows is that now? This will be my fifth solo show at the Fringe but I have been up here other years doing various things before I started stand-up. My first ever Fringe I was in a really heavy Max Frick play about anti-Semitism with my University drama group.

You’ve appeared on numerous TV programmes over the last decade or so. How well does TV serve Stand-Up comedy? There is no doubt that there has been a boom in Stand Up comedy? There are more men than women on the circuit that is a fact, as it is with many professions. I could rattle off a list of Chickens Comb. Yes, I wasn’t really known for my hard hitting political sketches.... Just larking about with a sketch that involved me pretending to audition for it is at the wonderful Canal Cafe. I loved it, it was so healthy, almost uniquely globally stand up circuit and it is not good for the circuit. The UK had a very healthy, almost uniquely globally stand up circuit and it is suffering at the moment. It would be wrong to blame it all on TV but certainly has had an effect.

Is it true that you used to perform with News Review? You've appeared on numerous TV programmes over the last decade or so. How well does TV serve Stand-Up comedy? You've appeared on numerous TV programmes over the last decade or so. How well does TV serve Stand-Up comedy? There are more men than women on the circuit that is a fact, as it is with many professions. I could rattle off a list of Chickens Comb. Yes, I wasn’t really known for my hard hitting political sketches.... Just larking about with a sketch that involved me pretending to audition for it is at the wonderful Canal Cafe. I loved it, it was so healthy, almost uniquely globally stand up circuit and it is not good for the circuit. The UK had a very healthy, almost uniquely globally stand up circuit and it is suffering at the moment. It would be wrong to blame it all on TV but certainly has had an effect.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING is a collection of hilarious, heart breaking, and unbelievable true stories from my life, from growing up in a punk rock band, to facing up to a string of bizarre jobs, working on Broadway, and dealing with Marcel Marceau and last but not least, love. The play also looks at how silence can affect us all – in families and in our culture.

How did the concept come about? I have always been a story teller - a journalist, in dressing rooms, dinner parties. Many of my Stories are about the world after I left as a Miner, and also my experience of being a very young boy in a small Montana town. It is a history of the AIDS epidemic in NYC in the 1980’s, back when so many people were still in the closet, and few people were talking about this disease. My own relationship with AIDS, and facing it like a man, through all my close friends, though many of them were still not out, and their huge joy about what needs to be talked about.

It's was awards. The show has had an incredible life so far, with sold out performances Off Broadway, and in over 80 cities in 25 States. It's was top honours in United States, the world's largest festival, and as it is the International Fringe Festival for (120) yrs, I am in an elite group. It is all driven by the audience response in major cities and small towns all over America. I am hoping Edinburgh audiences feel the same. Others have been incredibly enthusiastic as well, and I have been encouraged to continue writing new work (I am working on my 11th play now). The suprising part of all of this is that people identify so clearly with my story which is a pretty specific story: Small town gay boy becomes a mime, falls in love, becomes an AIDS activist, finds love again on BROADWAY, and then wins at all of it on French radio!

Is this your first time in Edinburgh? Don't you have an Edinburgh family connection? I saw in Edinburgh a few years ago for a wedding, but this will be my first time at the Fringe. However, my family actually comes from Edinburgh. In fact, the statue on the Place of Cities Church is of my Great Great Great Great Great Great-Great-Grandfather, Chief Simon Duncanson, Doctor of Divinity. He was sent Scotland for America in the 1820’s, and the statue as a historian lived on the Orkneys. He was the son of an old and most respected family, and his name is Kib chin-keo, and was born in 1790. It was the full circle for my family. I am an 18th century man of the cloth, in a 21st century gay man!

How did you get into performing? How long have you been performing? I never imagined that I would become a performer. I was very shy. I loved the idea of NOT TALKING, so I began to teach myself mime as a kid, and that led me through the side door of high school drama. I got hooked on theatre and studied acting and graduated school. I then became a professional actor in New York City for more than 20 years, so far!

Who inspires you? I love to watch Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. As a writer I love to watch David Sedaris and Sarah Vowell. My greatest inspiration these days is my 80 year old son.

Are there any Edinburgh Fringe shows you plan to see? I intend to see as many of the Edinburgh Fringe shows I can over the two weeks of the Fringe. It’s a long month and you need some pals around you. Also, I hope I will be seeing lots of acts I haven’t heard of. That is what the Fringe is all about.

Zoe Lyons appears on film during two free performances of Rosie Wilby's show at the Recovery Fringe, 7pm on Fri 5th and Fri 16th Aug.

There are more men than women on the circuit that is a fact, as it is with many professions. I was on a Roadshow tour in Australia and I was the only Sheila on the bill. Do they dominate? Not on my watch.
Glenn Chandler

Glenn Chandler (left) talks to Andrew Doyle (right) about creating Taggart, taking risks and bringing the classic p.c.g. novel Sandal to the stage.

It’s been a traumatic forty-eight hours for Glenn Chandler. When we meet at the bar at London’s Soho Theatre he tells us his arm is in a sling and his hand completely wrapped in bandages. “Our dog caught her paw in the conservatory door,” he tells us. “I tried to free her and she went for me.” He’s since had numerous stitches, a tetanus shot, and is currently taking a heavy course of antibiotics. “They thought I might need plastic surgery, but apparently not.”

Glenn has been a dog lover all his life, and when he tells the story there is a plaintive note to his voice. “My last two dogs were terribly placed,” he says. “They would have realised what I was trying to do. It’s not her fault. Dogs don’t have any of this consciousness, and since the onset of Operation Yewtree a barely a day has passed without some kind of media coverage. In the recent climate, it’s difficult to predict which of Glenn’s plays is more likely to provoke a hostile reaction from the media. When Angus Stewart’s novel Sandal was published in 1980 there was no future. Homosexuality had only been decriminalised in England a year before (Scotland had had to wait until 1982), and this perhaps meant that age of consent was only a minor concern. As Glenn explains, “back then people were focused on the question of whether homosexuality should be made illegal or not. There was a great variety of opinion. And of course when it happened it had to be over the age of twenty-one and in private.”

I mention to Glenn that a friend of mine remembers borrowing a copy of Sandal from his school library in 1979, something that would be unthinkable today. But as Glenn explains, at that time in public schools sexual relationships between older and younger boys were considered unacceptable. “Ask anyone who went to Eton and Harrow,” says Glenn. “Nobody batted an eyelid. There was no moral panic in those days. No sense that if you were under the age of sixteen you had to be locked up in a glass case and totally protected.”

This nuanced approach to such a sensitive issue is anathema to the more sensationalist elements of the tabloid press, who have been quick to brand Jeremy Forrest as a paedophile. Given the obvious parallels with Sandal, I ask Glenn if he has any thoughts on this kind of language. “To me a paedophile is someone who sleeps with children, ten or eleven, or younger. Falling in love with a fifteen-year-old girl makes you a paedophile. Are you a paedophile when the girl is two days off her sixteenth birthday, and not a paedophile when she’s two days older?”

That said, Glenn is very cautious when it comes to commenting on Forrest. “I wasn’t in court, I didn’t hear all the evidence, and I don’t know all the facts. I only know what I read in the newspapers. But the sentence did seem on the harsh side, I have to say. Human nature is a fickle thing. He was a teacher, he should have known better. But unfortunately we’re all prone to weaknesses, and just the fact. I don’t think there can be any doubt that they were in love with each other.”

For Killers, Glenn’s other play at this year’s Fringe, humour was perhaps less of a consideration. “It’s very dark,” he says. “But we had a great response when we did it at the Brighton Fringe.”

Given this sympathetic approach, is negative press coverage an inevitability? “We’ve had nothing adverse so far,” says Glenn. “I don’t know if I want to go down the road of courting sensational bad publicity.” Then, with a cheery smile, he adds: “I may just send a press release to Jan Moir.” Daily Mail readers will recall that Moir recently referred to Jeremy Forrest as “a slug inching towards the lettuce”, which just goes to show that moral outrage and bad writing tend to go hand in hand.

One aspect of Stewart’s novel that is often overlooked is its humour, which Glenn has been keen to retain. There is an arch and sardonic quality to Stewart’s writing, evident in images such as the crucifix hanging on a bedroom wall, “complete with contorted Saviour”, or the freshman whose reply to the question “are you a virgin?” is simply “in front, or behind, sir.”

“It’s a very funny novel,” says Glenn. “I’ve tried to put as much of that in as possible. A lot of Stewart’s dialogue just slips off the page.” Glenn tells me of the “great comic timing” between his actors. “I found a lovely actor called Tom Cawte to play Sandal. He’s nineteen but because he’s five foot he looks younger. Brian Penny plays David Rogers, and Calum Fleming plays his repressed Catholic brother Bruce Lang. They’re super. We did a dramatised reading in Haygate a while ago and we had literally two days of rehearsal. They got on top of it so quickly.”

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As we leave the Soho Theatre, I ask Glenn what his next writing project will be. “I’m not sure,” he replies. “I don’t think I could do wholesome family entertainment. It’s not my forte.” On the basis of his work at this year’s Fringe, one might see this as rather an understatement.

Sandal is at the Space@Surgery Hall at 6.45pm on 2-3 Aug (not 11), tel: 0844-693 3008, or tel: 0131-510 2384. For tickets go to www票客网.com or tel: 020-318-26-52. For more information on the theatre, tel: 020-7823-47-77. For tickets to other productions in the City Fringe Festival, tel: 0844 693 3008. For tickets go to www票客网.com or tel: 0131-510 2384. For tickets go to www票客网.com or tel: 0844 693 3008. For tickets to other productions in the City Fringe Festival, tel: 0844 693 3008.
Tell us about your show, ‘An Uncivil Partnership’.
It is a light-hearted memoir, it’s about coming out for me. I never felt like a kid (precocious), the perspectives in coming out, how I met my partner and the very distinct differences between us and how we have reached this point of a CP but also how society has gotten to this point in the relative short space of time from my “coming out”.
Why did you choose The New Town Bar to perform the show?
Well, last year Scott Agnew proposed to Jimmy Quinn (The Owner) and the Boys that I could be involved in The G-Spot which was used by put to show off the toiletries and then the gals to pair the gals to raise a fundraiser for Waverley Care. Jimmy took a chance on a wee international Glasgow based. I should never have worried but it did and I loved it. It’s a good time and the punters are great and there is a sense of community in that pub, a wee local bar in the centre of it all. That is why I believe they have been able to serve the community and giving something back.
You’re only performing for two nights! Why such a short run?
The maximum run of the beginning of September. There was no chance I could be ME (Missing In Edinburgh) for 4 weeks the stress levels are bad enough just now.
You hail from Glasgow. Do you like Edinburgh?
Well actually, I never thought I would say this but I have learned to love it the more time I spend in it. I always have good gigs and I have just learned to accept it is very different from Glasgow. Edinburgh is a very international city with all the tourism and it almost feels like being on tour between two cities in one. Sat 4’s genre is still strong but you accept that.
In stand-up comedy more dominated?
You do. However, I think an element of that is down to there that Stewart Merchant that puns have to be quick so you can’t do it as you need to do it. There are just less of them.
Are you a hit queen?
HA HA HA HA NO!!!!!!! HA HA HA
What do you think of the current gay marriage debate?
It would be phenomenal if we stood tall and said Yes, for a more balanced, equal Scottish society. A society where we do not differentiate heterosexual and homosexual love. Love is love!!!!!!!!! I cannot understand those so vehemently against it, maybe they should stop having gay babies.
Who are your favourite comedians?
I can’t stick out too many or telling stories it has to be The Big Yin, Who are your chips is still wrong!!! I can never accept that.
Is stand-up comedy male dominated?
No there’s a story that might take too long to tell but basically trained as an actor, performed for a few years, got married, had kids, got divorced, was a single parent on benefits when I suffered a brain haemorrhage! There is nothing quite like cheating death to galvanise you into action so I decided life was going to be all about me and to try and get back into acting just having away from the kids so long I can’t even have sex. Then I spotted an advert in The List magazine for a course in stand up and thought that if I learnt it I could kick back into acting so I signed up. I never expected I would have no desire whatsover to be a stand up but I did the course, performed the showcase and fell in love, that was 12 years ago and I’ve never looked back.
Why do you think you are so popular with gay people?
I have no idea but the feeling is mutual - I’m your archetypal fag hag.
Why are there so many Scottish comedians? Are Scots intrinsically funny?
We have always had a very distinct identity and use humour to deflect some of the criticism.
You work at The Stand Comedy clubs a lot.
I love The Stand! Every time I play there it’s like going back for a comedy hug. The staff are excellent, the audiences are brilliant and you get the space and support to perform the comedy you want to perform in a room where people really want to hear it, then you hope your audience will tell others and people will come up to you and say it was a fantastic show.
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Q&A
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Q&A
Jojo Sutherland
Box Office 0131-226 0000

Tell us about The G-Spot at The New Town Bar.
We have been very proud of sharing & showcasing a day Spa, Spa and Spa featuring some of the best acts on the fringe alongside some hidden gems who people may not of heard of yet. Scott Capurro will be dropping by as well Zoe Lyons, Lucy Porter, David Morgan, Ali Roberts and many many more – we will be having a veritable smorgasbord of comedy and cabaret elements. Susie is a force to be reckoned with being quite the leg up this year through slightly nervously that it’s becoming increasingly referred to as “Jojo’s G spot”.
Have you performed at the New Town Bar before? How did you get involved?
I have had the pleasure, for many years now, of performing at the NTB (Stand Comedy Clubs) as at Waverley Care. Jimmy Quinn has an amazing knack of getting people to say “Yes we do!” There are always such fun and attract some great performers coming across for a great cause. Even now has been fantastic, apart from one fact that was only because I was too drunk to remember anything about it.
You trained as an actor. How did you start doing stand-up?
Now there’s a story that might take too long to tell but basically trained as an actor, performed for a few years, got married, had kids, got divorced, was a single parent on benefits when I suffered a brain haemorrhage! There is nothing quite like cheating death to galvanise you into action so I decided life was going to be all about me and to try and get back into acting just having away from the kids so long I can’t even have sex. Then I spotted an advert in The List magazine for a course in stand up and thought that if I learnt it I could kick back into acting so I signed up. I never expected I would have no desire whatsover to be a stand up but I did the course, performed the showcase and fell in love, that was 12 years ago and I’ve never looked back.
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Who inspires you?
People who succeed despite the odds, along with some other comedians. I work for a company called Universal Comedy who work closely with people who have suffered long term illness and mental health issues where we run workshops using comedy as a tool to build confidence and self esteem and the people who I have met in the course of these workshops, overcoming physical and mental hurdles to stand up against their problems and basically batter them down is something that overpowers me with awe and constantly inspires me.
Why are there so many Scottish comedians? Are Scots intrinsically funny?
There are a few there! I’m not sure if I think, with or without independence, we Scots have always had a very distinct identity and use humour to deflect some of the criticism.
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Aaron Titchen’s Free Sisters (Venue B 50)

Cam He falls in love with his. He is gay and gets the Jews’ yellow concentration camp. He denies he and ‘gay’, all done with plenty of sorcery, anguish in new town.

The Gospel Truth (Venue C too)

A hilarious comedy revival of the music memoir of an inside show biz legend. In the Gospel Truth, Mills and explosive comedic personality. In the Gospel Truth, Mills combines music, monologue and histrionics, reflecting the lives of characters, people who have lived with and died from AIDS. Characters, people who have lived with and died from AIDS. Characters, people who have lived with and died from AIDS.

Milo McCabe: Schiz (Venue The Woodoo Rooms)

It Goes Without Saying (Venue Underbelly, Bristol)

Raging Queens (Venue The Street)

Munthe: Threesomes (Venue New Town Bar)

The Female Musical (Venue Spiegeltent @ The Merchantfield Hotel)

Tim’s Alcoholic Foster Sister (Venue at The Boyd Comedy Club 19 & 20)

Reigning Men: the Kiss of the Red Menace: A Tribute to Kander & Ebb (Venue @ The M usicals)

Sixty of the Best (Venue The Square)

A night of comedy with all manner of folk from around the Fringe. With a very special guest, Scott Caprani. Scott Caprani is back at the Fringe, now a married and monogamous professional jobby hunter. Scott Caprani is back at the Fringe, now a married and monogamous professional jobby hunter.

Chris Goes Down (Venue @ The Woodoo Rooms)

Putt Putt (Genre Comedy)

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A night of comedy with all manner of folk from around the Fringe. With a very special guest, Scott Caprani. Scott Caprani is back at the Fringe, now a married and monogamous professional jobby hunter. Scott Caprani is back at the Fringe, now a married and monogamous professional jobby hunter.

Chris Goes Down (Venue @ The Woodoo Rooms)

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Tell us about “Always (A Work in Progress)”?

This year I wanted to come to the Fringe and try out some new things. For example this year I have a guitar. I know! It’s a show of new ideas and there’s no better place to try out new things than the Fringe.

You perform regularly at The Stand venues. What is about The Stand that you like?

It’s all about the comedy. That sounds like it should be a given but in some clubs it’s all about the booze. The Stand books quality acts, supports local comics and particularly female acts. The Stand have no problem booking more than one woman a night, which is surprisingly rare. The Stand was the first gig I ever played – they’re more like family now.

It’s seems that you’ve never been off the TV or radio in the last couple of years. Which do you prefer or is performing live still your favourite way of working?

I love performing live. There’s no question that the thrill of an audience liking what you’re doing (or hating it) is a huge rush. I love radio without question and Radio 4 in particular have been a huge supporter of mine for the past few years. I like television shows as well, mostly because someone does make my up and my mother is always happy to see me looking pretty.

After seeing last year’s Edinburgh show, “This Lady’s Not For Turning Either”, I heard several audience members state that they had changed their minds about gay marriage and that they would start to support equality.

That show was important to do as the debate on equal marriage hadn’t yet reached Westminster or Holyrood and I wanted to do what I could to explain what it meant to me. Deify them if you will. The main thing is to believe what you’re saying. There’s no point in being political for the sake of a soundbite or to seem edgy. Funny first of all, but if you have something to say and you can make a difference I think you should go for it.

How do you feel about the current debate about equal marriage?

I think the public are extremely cool about the whole thing and politicians need to catch up!

Which other comedians inspire you?

Growing up I loved Victoria Wood, in Sand and French and Saunders. They still inspire me. In terms of comics that are around now just now Sarah Millican has been a friend and inspiration since we first started. Mary Bourke makes me want to write jolly jokes because she is so damn good and having seen Sarah Silverman live, if I could have an ounce of her charisma I’d die happy.

What was it like growing up gay in Glasgow?

Not the easiest, but then I grew up when the Internet wasn’t around. I think it would’ve been easier if I’d known other gay people existed! I had some problems at University and beyond with people who were vastly homophobic but the city has changed a lot and for the better.

Has Glasgow changed much in terms of attitudes to LGBT people?

I think it has. I think there is an acceptance of the community and I haven’t had any real problems in Glasgow for years. And you can’t get much more out than I am!

During Easter this year you presided over an upbeat atheist church service in Glasgow. How did that come about and will you be doing more?

I was asked by Sanderson Jones, who organises it, to take part. The point of the service is to give people who aren’t religious a space to celebrate life. It was a joyous and fun morning and I’d love to do more.

Have you ever been sent any ‘Ferrero Rocher’ by a fan?

Lots. People give them to me after shows. I very much enjoy each and every one.

What’s your ambition for this coming year?

I’m in the middle of various stages of development of sitcoms I’ve written. My main ambition is to see one of them make it to the screen.

You deservedly won the Chortle Award for Best MC last year. Which four comedians would be performing on your dream night and who would be the headliner?

Mary Brooks, Bridget Christie, Joe Lycett and Sarah Millican headlining.

Tell us about your Edinburgh Fringe show?

I had three shows, not counting guest appearances elsewhere. Mister Meredith’s Christmas Cracker, Harry Dry, Things and Magic / Context Cabaret, and was hotly exhausted! Thank work I’m scaling back this year to just two. Four years, eight shows. Never do anything by half!

Tell us about your latest show.

It’s all about the singing. With a bit of a mix-up, and I had to call it Knees-up Round the Organ. The60s/70s/80s/90s/2000s/2010s vibe that I love in my head never fully gets on the stage. Can’t blame the singing by the way, I’ve got it in my head with a few of my own songs: Mountain, Total Eclipse, Bohemian Rhapsody and No Scrubs. A word of warning – I’ve been known to be a bit of a diva! Oh yes. Can’t shut me up. I’ll do it in the streets, on the back seats of coaches, the middle of the road, in the middle of the night! Where do we find you when you’re not performing in Edinburgh?

I’m at The Voodoo Rooms, getting his bum out. I’ll be poking my head up (in the show, not up the smallest part of my body) near the top of the stage. For the rest of the time I’ll be trying to get out of the rain and drinking.

Let’s have a topical debate! Although there’s more than one debate going on here. Let’s get people asking why we’d want to ape what’s seen as a straight institution, and there’s two golden rules that anyone should be able to do what they bloody well like with their bodies. I believe that if you’re not married or in the army or about to get married, but I will defend someone’s right to do it.

What do you make of the current debate about equal marriage?

I think there’s a lot of debate. Although there’s more than one debate going on there. Let’s get people asking why we’d want to ape what’s seen as a straight institution; and there’s two golden rules that anyone should be able to do what they bloody well like with their bodies. I believe that if you’re not married or in the army or about to get married, but I will defend someone’s right to do it.

What inspires you?

I’m inspired by comedy, I’m inspired by the way people dress, I’m inspired by my colleagues who make me laugh more than anyone else, I’m inspired by the people who make me laugh more than anyone else who inspire me, and I’m inspired by the way people dress.

Find Out More:

www.mrmeredith.co.uk and freetypes.to/rst

The Voodoo Rooms

Knees-up Round the Organ!

5-25 Aug (Sat 13)
Gazing again into that angelic face of his, I remembered the story of that year, and how his friendship had changed me, and led to a decision that had a huge impact on my future. And I began to write. At first, it was an essay, but then, it was a book. At first, I was not eager to give this play a life, because I knew I was a story I would have to tell myself. And that would mean I couldn’t hand the script off to an actor. I’d have to expose myself to critical scrutiny as a performer. I’d have to rehearse with a director. I’d have to work hard to regain my skills as a storyteller in front of live audiences.

This may sound corny, but I decided to do this for Bill. A lot of solo shows that are autobiographical can be self-centered, in the worst way. Getting back at one’s parents or teachers, proving self-worth by showing off. Asking for self-pity, and getting applause. I never wanted to write like that, so I resisted a true story. But this isn’t just my story, it’s also Bill’s story. There’s a lot of story in our friendship. Bill wanted to be a modern composer, but left Julliard after a few years because he changed. He wanted to tell stories about true things that would move people emotionally. He went to film school. In his brief creative life, he managed to write, produce, and direct the very first feature film with a realistic story about gay men with AIDS. The title was “Parting Glances,” and it premiered in 1986. It was the only film he ever made.

I began as a composer, too, and eventually made my way to Boston University to get a graduate degree in playwriting, because... because I also wanted to tell stories about true things that would move people emotionally. I’m hoping puppets at the Fringe will see both, “Made for Each Other” and “The Year I Was Gifted.” They belong together. They talk to each other. They share the truth together, like Siamese twin plays.

Tell us about being the 37th Beatle.

Debate about equal marriage in Scotland and England?

This year you undertook a Comic Relief 24 Hour Album Challenge. What do you want to see in Doctor Who’s 50th anniversary special, and who should direct it?

This year you undertook a Comic Relief 24 Hour Album Challenge. It was as much an exercise in seeing if I could do it as a charitable thing... I’m glad we raised as much as we did and I’m actually proud of the show although I don’t seem to have many memories of the 24 hour session itself.

What do you want to see in Doctor Who’s 50th anniversary special, and who should direct it?

Wouldn’t you like to see the casting process as family? I’ve never heard of Matt Smith being approached... I’m sure whoever the pick will still be exciting. I’m looking forward to the 50th Anniversary special although I can’t see how I’d get it live as I’m touring with The Maccabees in July. The Galaxy lives on... I’m looking out as Aardvark.

There’s talk of a UK version of The Daily Show with John Oliver? Can you imagine John Stewart now?

I wouldn’t attend the story The Daily Show, that just format wouldn’t work on British TV for a number of reasons. But also I’d never try to do what John Oliver does because he’s a one-man-operation genius. John’s doing a good job standing in for him but he’s never been learning at the feet of the master.

Edinburgh was your home for four years. Do you miss it?

I miss Edinburgh because I knew it’s where I’ve never been there when I want it.
Tell us about the play 'Forever 27'.

Forever 27 is a dark comedy about the life, loves and lust of a gay man, residing in an average, straight world living by the motto 'Live fast, die young'. Mark is Mr Average, who, now resentful over his rather dull uneventful life, decides he will be instead successful in death. He plans an elaborate suicide before his twenty eighth birthday in order to be remembered, leave a legacy and join the host of stars that burnt out before their time to join the notorious, '27 Club'.

How did you get involved with the production?

I was introduced to the writer, Sarah, by my director, Tricia, as she suggested we work together. I went up to Manchester to see 'The Speed of Dating', another one person show that Sarah had written. I loved the show, the writing and also her outlook on life. I asked if she would write a play for me and so it progressed really from there. After taking it around the festivals last year and receiving some great reviews I realised the potential the play had to grow and evolve, that's when I brought on board our producers, Craig and Jonny of Dirty Cackle Productions.

Are you a fan of Jimi, Janis, Jim, Kurt and Amy (Winehouse)?

Well they are all people who have influenced generations with their music and who they are, that it’s difficult not to be a fan. I didn’t realise until starting this play exactly how many legends died at 27 and was a huge fan before I even had the connection; especially of Amy and Janis.

How close to your character, Mark are you in real life?

I think there are aspects of myself that are quite similar to Mark but I think there are aspects of Mark that everyone can relate to. I wouldn’t go to such extremes in my life as he does but I do think there might be elements of his personality that I quite admire and can probably relate to some of the situations he finds himself in. When I first read the script I was worried that we were too close but we really aren’t all that alike.

Is this your first time in Edinburgh?

Yes it is and I’m incredibly excited about it. A bit of a dream come true.

How did you get into acting?

Acting is my passion and my life, I know that sounds cliché but because it is something that has always felt right for me, it’s something that I’ve always done. I trained locally from the age of sixteen, took a lot of the acting exams. I’ve done some West End shows and some short films but I would say that this is the biggest project I’ve been part of. I feel most happy and comfortable when I’m on stage.

Who inspires you?

I am inspired by actors who worked hard in their career, trained hard, put in the hours and who are professionals; like people who really are full of life. If at all work but because that dedication then shines in the work. I have a real thing for older classical actors, like Richard Burton, Ian McKellen, Helen Mirren, Bette Davis... but I do think there’s inspiration in any one that works hard at doing what they love.

Any other Edinburgh Fringe that you plan to see?

There is so much to see and I am really excited but I am certainly taking the time to check out as much as possible while I can. I am sure Stewie Graham has a new play and I really imagine me, that it may be good. I am really looking forward to Billy Blinks interesting. I like comedy and then’s the best available so I’d be silly to miss out.

Find Out More:

facebook.com /forever27theplay

www.thespaceuk.com
Inn in New York?

Is it true that GSA originated in the famous Stonewall festivals, but truly nothing comes close to the magic of beautiful audience members. The energy at the Fringe and repeat! It was an absolute dream! The LGBT... Last year's Fringe was fantastic. The audiences were so... But seriously, each day was as follows: wake up at 2pm, our venue is a pub and we have a late night show. And... American Gay Rights... there is always an interesting crowd! At my last show, two drag queens named Lauren and is not inclusive of women and minority groups. As... inequality in the USA in a... We all know that separate but equal never worked, after... in NYC are not confined to the “gay ghettos” of Chelsea, Hells Kitchen, and the West Village. I have as many gay friends as straight, and that goes for comedy companions as well. Basically, I believe in integration instead of segregation. We all know that separate but equal never worked, after all. And ultimately the mission of GSA since 2012 has been to break down stereotypes, proving that gays and straights are equally awful.

How long have you been performing?

I've been performing for about two years. Running my own show has been extremely important for my development as a comedian. It gives me appreciation for the producers and higher-ups in the industry and forces me to assess the performance of other comedians. When I see comics now I think: which audience would connect with them? Should I book them this month, and with which other comedians? Of course, this goes both ways—now I think who would book me, and for God's sake why?

Who inspires you?

I find comedians who push the envelope inspirational, regardless of gender, sexuality, or race. In the last few years, I'd say I've found Sarah Silverman to be inspirational for her sheer disregard of propriety. Tig Notaro is inspirational for pushing the limits of what constitutes live performance — she challenges her audiences in a way no one else does. And Wanda Sykes, for instance, highlights the hypocrisies of gender, sexuality, and race inequality in the USA in a beautiful and clever way.

What other shows will you be appearing at this month in Edinburgh?

I'm excited to see Rose Bilby’s “Is Monogamy Dead?” this year. I'll also be seeing the words performance art pieces. You know the show you where the grown man wearing a cape and funny hat is hugging while singing Carlie Rae Jepsen’s “Call Me Maybe?” That one I’m definitely seeing. It got five star reviews!

Are gay people political enough?

Gay people are definitely not political enough. First of all, we're a fractured community. Each gay community in the USA has its own problems: gays in Texas are afraid for their lives, while gays in Chelsea are afraid of heterosexual “quantification”. It’s hard for us to get behind something (no pun intended) because we all have different priorities and problems. At least gay marriage has united us. I would say it's comparable to other rights rallies in the USA during the 50s and 60s. But seriously, each day was as follows: wake up at 2pm, our venue is a pub and we have a late night show. And... American Gay Rights... there is always an interesting crowd! At my last show, two drag queens named Lauren and is not inclusive of women and minority groups. As... inequality in the USA in a... We all know that separate but equal never worked, after... in NYC are not confined to the “gay ghettos” of Chelsea, Hells Kitchen, and the West Village. I have as many gay friends as straight, and that goes for comedy companions as well. Basically, I believe in integration instead of segregation. We all know that separate but equal never worked, after all. And ultimately the mission of GSA since 2012 has been to break down stereotypes, proving that gays and straights are equally awful.

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Tell us a bit about the plot of your new Edinburgh Fringe show, “SingMeThis”!

SingleMARRIEDGIRL is based on a blog by a woman who has been married for a long time, over a decade, and although she isn’t unhappy, she isn’t really satisfied, with her career, with her life in general. It’s a bit of an everyman story, how we get in a rut where we think, “I guess this is just how it is,” and how we decide when that maybe just ok isn’t enough. Discovering her complete lack of independence Laurel Spears, the main character, decides to take herself on a date to see what happens when people to sometimes hilarious, sometimes poignant results.

The blog “Adventures of a SINGLEMARRIEDGIRL” is written by me under the pseudonym Laurel Spears, so although the writing is original, the story is very close to my heart. When I decided to adapt it to the stage, I wanted to keep the feel of the blog, the first person conversation but somehow create a cohesive story. The blog itself had something like 80 entries at the time, written over three years so I pulled my favourite entries, the ones which felt most resonant and imposed a sort of year-long timeline. A lot of the show was developed work shopping it for Capital Fringe in DC as the original piece was something like two hours and a half hours-long I knew I had to scale that down a bit!

Who are “Tasty Monster Productions”?

Tasty Monster Productions is primarily me and my real-life partner and Co-Founding Artistic Director Luke Tubbs. I used to work in the film industry so when I decided to try the theatre world, I looked for a company where the directors were real artists, not just a name on the letterhead. Luke Tubbs was, and I wasn’t a regular theatre-goer, so I didn’t have a specific director in mind. I was looking for a director who was going to be as passionate about theatre as I was, and who was going to believe in our show and make it happen. After a few meetings and looking at scripts, Luke came back to me and said he was willing to direct, and that’s how we started our company.

How long have you been performing?

I’ve been performing for a long time. I started doing Improv and sketch comedy in college, and then moved on to improv and sketch comedy in New York City. In the past few years, I’ve been doing stand-up comedy and acting in TV shows and movies. I’ve also been directing and producing my own work, which I’ve had a lot of success with.

How are you promoting the show?

We’re promoting the show through social media, flyers, and word of mouth. I’m also doing a few speaking engagements at festivals and conferences, and I’ve been invited to participate in a few benefits and charity events. The feedback has been really positive so far, and I’m really excited about the reception the show has received.

What was the inspiration for this show?

The inspiration for this show came from my own experiences as a single mother. I’ve always been passionate about women’s rights and equality, and I wanted to create a show that would raise awareness about these issues and inspire others to take action.

What’s next for you after this show?

After this show, I’m planning to develop a few more shows and perhaps a book. I’m also interested in working on a film project, and I’m looking for opportunities to collaborate with other artists. I’m excited about the future and I’m looking forward to seeing where this journey takes me.
Hello boys, what have you been up to since we spoke last year? It’s been a busy year for us. After the last Fringe we had a few days off and then went straight to London and into the final writing stages and workshops for our BBC3 TV series which will be on this autumn we think. Then it was off to Glasgow for four films to film the series, which was amazing, although it wasn’t as glamorous as you’d think. On a cold day in November we had to stand in the sea at Longs for quite a while in our pants, all for ten second-length sketches! Walking around Govan for the day dressed as nuns was also interesting. At the start of 2012 we were involved in the edit of the show - it’s a slow process, especially when discussion sessions with a people took place over Skype as we’re all living in different cities now! So once that was finished and we delivered the show to the BBC, we had a little break from each other to be jobbing actors and writers. The Ging filmed a part in Jack Whitehall’s Bad Education, the Geek showed his sad side in Waterloo Road and the Geordie decided to write a new play. Oh and the Ging and Geordie separated after a decade of flash-sharing, as their other halves finally put their foot down, that was quite emotional. They’ll miss that morning coffee and cuddles that get them through the day. So it’s been quite busy for all of us really.

Tell us about this year’s Edinburgh show. As this could very well be our last Edinburgh together, we thought we’d do a Best of GGG show. We adapted a lot of our stage sketches for the TV show so we’ll be doing the best of those stage versions to create what we hope will be an hour of non-stop hit sketches. The show is called Moving Family. It’s a sharp, comic, and honest look at prejudice in modern Britain through the eyes and words of its future generation. It’s about two sets of teenage siblings who must sort out their differences before they start their life together as a ‘step family’ and to add to the complications it’s set in the back of a removal van en route to their new home. The play examines issues of identity and modern bigamy, asking the difficult questions that young people face in a constantly evolving cultural landscape. However, above all it is a play full of laughs and hope, as I wanted to make the play accessible to people that perhaps would not normally consider themselves theatre-goers and might usually prefer comedy. So if you’re going to try one play this year, Moving Family would be a good shout.

Who inspires you? For us as a group we’ve always looked to the old classics. Morecambe and Wise and The Two Ronnies stand out as the perfect entertainers. Their shows were funny and family friendly, but also clever. That’s what we always try to do. The best sketches of Big Train are also amazing.

Any other Edinburgh Fringe acts this year that you plan to see? Ginge - Tony Law, truly a mad genius and the colour bar at our venue, great entertainment.

Geordie - The stand up James Acaster is going to have a big festival this year. His last show was amazing and the latest movie Northern Stage’s show Border Ballads looks fantastic.

Geek - Well this year I’m going to have to see Andrea Maxwell - I heard he’s a great story tiler.

We hope you enjoy the show!
Well OMG!! What's happened to the weather? We've had something unfamiliar to lot of us but it appears summer has hit. Let's hope it sticks around for Glasgow Pride.

Yes, us LGBT Fifers will be taking full advantage of Glasgow's hospitality on Aug 10th. The Out In Fife gang will be rounding everyone up once more making sure all us Fifers are there with whistles on. The guys haven't released the details but are keeping us all up to date with arrangements on their Facebook page, just search Out In Fife to be kept in the know. I'm pretty confident it'll just as good as last month's Pride Scotia over in Edinburgh.

And talking of the Out In Fife crew, they are busy organising their first birthday bash. It's hard to believe that it's only been a year but they're going from strength to strength. The party will take place at the end of Aug at The Jam Jar in Dunfermline. The guys are also getting ready to announce their plans for the next year with new venues and different areas of The Kingdom going to be playing host to Fife's only LGBT night.

For the ladies, Fife Inbetweeners is a social group formed just over a year ago meeting fortnightly at The Man I The Rock pub. Set up as a link between two larger groups (Rubyfruits in Edinburgh and Outskirtsocial in Dundee) to keep the lovely ladies of Fife up to date with various events from walks to boat trips. All groups are informal and fun and are there to help create friendships with other like minded women around The Kingdom.

For further information on these groups contact Gay Midas Johnson via Facebook or email brathedug@btinternet.com.

And for our young ones, the youth groups around The Kingdom continue to grow in numbers. Based in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Leven and open to those aged 13+. For Dunfermline e-mail: vikki.robertson@fife.gov.uk, for Kirkcaldy e-mail: lisa.hunter@fife.gov.uk and Leven e-mail: info@lgbtyouth.org for more information.

With this glorious weather it's time I poured a jug of Pimms and retreated into the garden. See you all in Glasgow.

It's hotting up in the north this summer - long may it continue! Drag queen Lady L will be live on stage to run proceedings on Tue 6th Aug for the LGBT night at ACES at Miami Nightclub in Inverness. Doors open at 9pm. Free entry. Over 18’s only.

For you sporty LGBT folks, holds a free jogging session starting from Inverness Leisure every Wed at 6.30pm. All levels of joggers are welcome! Contact him on 07941 553620 or e-mail: jampa40@yahoo.co.uk.

All the local groups continue throughout the summer with their regular dates. The guys meet in Inverness from 8pm every Wed in Macnab’s Bar at the Columba Hotel. The Inverness LGBT Youth Group meets every Tue from 7-9pm at the Bike Shed in Grant Street. The Pink Castle Philosophy Club meets on the 1st Tue of every month at 7.30pm in the Glen Mhor Hotel (Ness Bank, Inverness). The topic on 13th Aug will be ‘What is so wrong about cheating in sport?’ LGBT Moray gets together twice a month in Forres and Elgin, while the North Highlands LGBT Social Group meets up twice a month in Thurso. Even if you are just visiting on holiday, why not pop in for a chat? All the dates/venues are listed on www.gay-ness.org.uk

The Highland Rainbow Folk have been asked to do some presentations to service providers and are looking for over 50’s with a story to tell.

The group raises awareness of the issues facing older LGBT people and meets once a month in Inverness. You can contact Tony by e-mail at highlandrainbowfolk@gmail.com.

Looking ahead to the autumn - the Highland LGBT Forum is visiting the Northern Isles. They will be in Kirkwall on Thu 5th Sep hosting a conference with the Highlands & Islands Equality Forum and then joining the BHHR Human Rights Tour in Lerwick on Thu 3rd Oct.

Save the date LGBT Youth Scotland is hosting a conference at Eden Court Theatre in Inverness on Fri 13th Sep. Participants will include local service providers plus the Highland LGBT Forum, Merkinch Partnership, Brock Highland, Equality Forum, etc. This should prove to be a ground-breaking event for the Highlands!
18+ only. Helpdesk 0844 944 0844. Live calls recorded. 0871 = 9p per min. Network extras apply.
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