



Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Back to School



Back To School is a site-specific, interactive experience where audience members are cast as students, premiering at the Pleasance for this year's Edinburgh Festival. Part-comedy, part-social experiment, this new show from Britain's modern day 'Mary Poppins', in collaboration with playwrights Ranjit Bolt and Ella Hickson (among others), promises to delight and amuse.

The Reporter went along this afternoon with no real preconceptions, but in any case each show will be different depending on who is in the audience. If you loved school you will love this show. If you hated it then you will love the show even more as it will allow you to recapture your younger disobedient truculent self.

 We met the school lollipop lady at Pleasance Courtyard  and walked holding onto a rope for safety of course, to the school which is situated in Braidwood Community Centre. This is a lovely building and fits the purpose very well. This is clearly a great venue, but for us locals you have to appreciate this is a wonderful community centre too, with a large garden area to the rear and a wonderful view of Arthur's Seat just beyond. A pity then that it is threatened with closure. It is in great condition for a public building, and has many rooms which could be adapted to a wide variety of uses.

A flavour of what was to come awaited us outside the front door...



Our class started off with PE, featuring the married PE teachers who had exactly the same names...! Then we moved onto art and science, interspersed with a school photo and lunch (apparently you were meant to bring your own...!) The cast were immaculately always in character, although it was sometimes difficult to pinpoint who was in the cast which made it all the more real.

It is a very active and interactive show, so be prepared to become involved, and do a bit of running about during it, as well as walking the ten minutes from the Pleasance to get there. Our own view was that some of the people attending today could have become more involved and it could have all been a bit more entertaining if they had. So go with a good group of chums!



Mixing comedy and masterclass, 'pupils' attending 'Saint Dumbiedykes' will study insect dissection with one of the country's most renowned entomologists, take sex education classes with flirtation expert Tracey Cox, hear their graduation speech given by Jonathan Ross as well as enjoying irreverent takes on the school assembly, school dinners (make sure to eat your greens) and the end of term disco. With a resurrected school hamster and a mystery celebrity playing the school bell, Back To School promises to be a rollicking good show, full of Fringe fun, dark surprises and extra-curricular chaos.

Here are some of the sounds from today's show, but remember yours will be different!


The show is the brainchild of 'Super Tutor' and comedian

Clementine Wade (founder of Arty Kamikaze productions). Wade commented; "Whether we loved or loathed school, we've all been through it! The nightmares, the celebrations, the trials and tribulations, all make up its theatre. Using this well-known format, normally the exclusive privilege of the young, the audience can relax from the responsibilities of adult life, enjoy the luxury of learning, whilst potentially exorcising a few demons."

Developed in response to the renowned psychological experiments of Zimbardo and Milgram, Back To School and Back To School Disco are new theatrical experiences that play on the social construct of the school. Arty Kamikaze aim to amuse and enliven, giving the audience another chance to be big kids and mess around in assembly, spicing up the educational debate and proving it is never too old to be young and never too late to learn.

Back To School is being showcased at the Braidwood Community Centre which currently faces closure. Arty Kamikaze chose to work in partnership with the Centre to raise its profile and support its work as a hub for the Holyrood community. Throughout August, the performance team will be running free, daily community events, from storytelling to CV surgeries, for local Edinburgh residents to raise funds to regenerate the Centre.

Back to School will take place at Braidwood Community Centre, 69 Dumbiedykes Road, EH8 9UT from 1st – 26th August.

The show lasts one hour and thirty minutes. Dumbiedykes  Road can be found off Holyrood Road, running alongside Holyrood Park.

Previews: 1st – 2nd August, 4pm (£8)
3rd August, 1.30pm and 4pm (£8)

Weekday shows: 7th-9th, 14th-16th, 21st-23rd August, 1.30pm and 4pm (£10)

Weekend shows: 4th-5th, 10th-12th, 17th-19th, 24th-26th,
1.30pm and 4pm (£15)

School Disco: Every Friday and Saturday, 10pm – 1am (£10)

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