

# Edinburgh Fringe Review: Billy the Mime \*\*\*\*



## [Billy the Mime](#)

*Venue 88, Just the Tonic at the Caves*

If you believe some subjects are too serious to joke about, then Billy the Mime is probably best avoided. The show involves a number of brief scenarios illustrating some of the more contentious news events of recent years including a potted biography of Michael Jackson, 9/11, sexual abuse in the Catholic church, and more. There's even a spectacularly politically incorrect mime of WWII. The audience are visibly uncomfortable for much of the show -there are audible gasps of disbelief at some material. Some people hiss, several more walk out. Billy serves his sacred cows rare with a side of fries.

But on closer examination, the material is hardly more shocking than any of the usual political satire one finds on mainstream television. The power, it seems, is all in the mime. Turns out it's one thing to make jokes about Charles and Diana's misjudged marriage, but act it out and suddenly it hits uncomfortably close to the bone.

There are a few less controversial sketches thrown in for good measure (a History of Art from cave- to pop- is a particular high point) and often the humour of these surpasses the more controversial material, where so many of the laughs are derived largely from Billy's audacity in presenting them at all.

The laughs may result from shock or discomfort, from Billy's mastery of physical comedy, or from his irreverent take on

everything from relationships to pop culture, but if you have there are plenty of jokes if you have the stomach for them.

Edinburgh Fringe website has booking information [here](#)