

# Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Major Tom



**Venue: Summerhall Venue 26, Dates: 2 – 25 Aug 2013 (not 5, 12, 19) Time: 16.45 (ends 18.00) Tickets: £12 (£10 concs)**

Victoria Melody/Farnham Maltings/Harlow Playhouse/Escalator East to Edinburgh present Major Tom

How an unlikely pair of underdogs became a beauty queen and championship show dog. Artist Victoria Melody is the reigning Mrs Brighton and an unlikely beauty queen. Her unruly basset hound, Major Tom, has become a championship show dog.

When Major Tom accidentally won an amateur dog show his unexpected success prompted Victoria to examine her own prize winning potential. She decided to put herself through the same scrutinising process by competing for the title of Mrs Galaxy UK – the ‘married’ version of Miss UK.

After winning her regional round, Victoria has spent the past year as ‘Mrs Brighton’ in a wide range of public appearances. She has used this opportunity to access the subculture of this exclusive, members-only, club and has quite literally metamorphosised herself into a beauty queen, unrecognisable to friends and family.

The show, in which Victoria and Major Tom appear together onstage, follows their journey through the obsessive and confusing realm of personal scrutiny using film and photography to document their adventures.

Major Tom questions how even the most self-assured amongst us (even if they are a feminist) can become intoxicated with the allure of beautification, celebrity and competition. The

initial artistic experiment blurs into Victoria's real life leading her husband to ask when they can go back to their old lives. But Victoria had never won anything before so she has become competitive and really wants to win Crufts and Mrs UK – and she thinks they are in with a chance.

Victoria's eccentric, ethnographic approach to making performances finds her immersing herself in other people's worlds. Victoria examines national characteristics, focusing on the extraordinary in the everyday.

To create her one-woman theatrical shows about England's pastimes, passions and tribes she immerses herself into communities and becomes a participant. Before becoming a championship dog handler and beauty queen she has been a pigeon racer and a northern soul dancer. Her show Northern Soul, directed by Ursula Martinez, toured extensively.

Major Tom has been selected for Escalator East To Edinburgh. Each year Escalator East to Edinburgh helps artists and arts organisations to raise their profile and perform to new audiences as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It was developed at BAC, Nightingale Theatre, The Showroom Chichester and MAKE, Ireland, is supported by Harlow Playhouse and produced by Farnham Maltings.