

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013 – REVIEW – Mike Newall – Six Weddings ***.5



On his third Fringe and on the back of tours supporting heavy-hitters Justin Moorhouse and Alun Cochrane, Mike Newall brings a laid back Northern charm to the Fringe but his laughs come from angst and obsession. After attending six weddings in eight months Mike has learned how expensive weddings are and how to get away with being a cheap guest, but he hasn't escaped the dawning crisis of a single thirty-something. Mike wants to know why he isn't the one holding the bride and would like to convince the world he's got what it takes...

This well-crafted show has a laid back style that suits the small venue and intimate audience of Just the Tonic at The Tron. Storytelling comes easy and the laughs are sharp as Mike Newall picks at the oddities of weddings, demands from friends, relationships and how he could make the perfect husband. Mike does this through preserving the integrity of his socks from un-pairing, understanding the intricacies of value shopping, recycling and avoiding any form of discomfort. The audience appreciated these quirks alongside off-beat surreal and clever observations.

Having attended six weddings in eight months Mike had stories and thoughts on the subject of expectation – from wedding cake to dinner speeches and stag nights. These are executed well and are the strength of the show as Mike Newall is a popular with his friends while all this contrasts well with his scepticism of marriage, relationships, wedding traditions and formalities. More of this would have been welcome – particularly to replace the weaker parts of the show when

Mike's voice failed and he looked end-of-Fringe-tired, reading out a dozen texts his 9 year-old nephew sent him and failing to reach a punch-line.

Just the Tonic at The Tron venue has good air-conditioning but very poorly ventilated toilets. A louder and clearer speaker system would have helped Mike Newall's ailing voice at the end of a hard month.

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