

# Underbelly announces its 2014 Edinburgh Fringe programme

How exciting! Underbelly are coming back to Edinburgh after the success of their Christmas and New Year offerings to entertain us with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

**This year they promise bigger, better and more diverse than ever before.**

It all started 14 years ago in two small theatre spaces in Cowgate and has now grown into one of the largest and most creative venues at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. 2014 sees Underbelly play host to 136 companies in 16 venues spread across the Old Town of Edinburgh, with many travelling from America, Australia, South Africa, Canada, Ireland and even Glasgow to join us. From circus, comedy, theatre, new writing, music and family friendly shows; there is something for everyone in this year's Underbelly programme.



## **Highlights from this years comedy programme:**

- **What does the title matter anyway?:** A live extravaganza of the improvisational comedy show is coming to the Fringe this August! Hosted by Clive Anderson, what will undoubtedly become one of the smash-hit shows of this year's festival will see some of the finest members in the improvisational world back together to adlib their way in a 14 night run at the 1,000 seater McEwan Hall. Greg Proops, Stephen Frost, Josie Lawrence, Mike McShane, Richard Vranich and Colin Mochrie are all confirmed to join the joviality, with other special guests to be announced. Performing an array of various popular improv games, this is a show that promises to bring an hour of unpredictable hilarious nostalgia into

your Fringe this year as the contestants await their instructions from the audience. Will they be forced to sing a hoe-down? Who will stand up, sit down and lie down? Which party quirk will keep the player on their toes? What World's Worst will they come up with? Could they re-enact the Film and Theatre Styles from the Fringe?! Just how many props can they make from a pointless inanimate object? And how on earth will they read the end credits?!

This explosion of a Fringe show will be a battle of the wits for the improvisers and a thrilling trip down memory lane for the audience. No two shows will ever be the same. No points awarded will make any sense. Book early to avoid disappointment!!

- **Susan Calman:** The *QI*, *Have I Got News For You* and BBC Radio 4 regular returns to the Fringe with a brand new show. *Lady Like* is a reassuring hour spent with the woman her neighbours call 'the mad cat lady'.
- **Abandoman:** Ireland's top comedy hip hop improv team return to Edinburgh fully loaded with a four piece band, for their biggest show to date. Join them at the *Hot Desk* for the greatest musical party in Edinburgh.
- **Fascinating Aida:** With hilarious new songs and outrageous old favourites, the fabulous ladies of Fascinating Aida continue to grow old disgracefully with their terrific new show, *Charm Offensive*.
- **John Lloyd's Museum of Curiosity Live:** Following his sell-out fringe debut, John and curator Dan Schreiber host a live version of the BBC Radio 4 hit in which guests donate their favourite items to an infinitely large and impossible museum. Different daily guests include Jimmy Carr, Susan Calman, Phill Jupitus, and a host of entertaining experts.
- **Russell Kane:** What is it with us and smallness? The multi award-winning Russell Kane returns with his sell-out big-small show *Smallness*, that will have you popping

with laughter. For *Three Nights Only* alongside his theatrical debut (see overleaf).

- **Frisky and Mannish:** They're back with *Just Too Much* to bring us a brand-new hour packed tighter than Robin Thicke's crotch region. Now all grown up (like Miley and Bieber) their barely-conscious recoupling marks the beginning of a new pop-comedy-mashup-infotainment era.
- **Sam Simmons:** Prepare yourself as the master of suburban, absurdist comedy returns to Edinburgh with his brand new show: *Death of a Sails-Man*. Foster's Edinburgh Comedy Award Nominee 2011.
- **Will Adamsdale:** Perrier winner 2004 returns to Edinburgh with a show about borders. Borders over land, borders across time and even borders down the side of the pieces of paper.
- **KRAKEN: Winner of the 2014 Edinburgh Underbelly Award (Adelaide Fringe).** From award-winning Gaulier-trained clown and creator of smash hit *Squidboy*, comes Trygve Wakenshaw's new physical comedy, *KRAKEN*. Beautifully strange stream-of-consciousness idiocy. Nominated: Barry Award for Best Show, Melbourne International Comedy Festival, 2014. Nominated: Golden Gibbo Award, 2014.

### **Come run away to the circus. Highlights this year:**

- **Circa: Beyond:** Step Beyond... into a sublimely surreal, unexpectedly moving world of rabbit heads, Rubik's Cubes and dizzying circus that's thrilled audiences around the globe. Irreverent vaudeville, bestial comedy from the company behind 2013's hit *Wunderkammer*.
- **A Simple Space:** Get up close and personal with one of Australia's hottest and most original circus ensembles as they push themselves to their physical limits in this captivating and unforgettable show of breathtaking acrobatics.
- **Bromance:** Join one of the UK's hottest new circus troupe

as they walk the line between the pugnacious and the poignant in this hilarious, bitter-sweet and down-right jaw-dropping celebration of everything blokey – where handshakes become handstands, and back-slaps become back-flips.

**The IdeasTap Underbelly Award** is back and bringing four brilliant shows to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. The award offers funding and support from IdeasTap, mentoring from leading theatre practitioners and Underbelly staff and a slot at the Underbelly Cowgate.

**The 2014 IdeasTap Underbelly Award winners are:**

- **Mush and Me** (written by Karla Crome): Follows the friendship of a Jewish girl and a Muslim boy as cultural pressures and contemporary worlds collide.
- **How to achieve redemption as a Scot through the medium of Braveheart** (by Rachael Clerke): Explores identity, belonging and machismo, delving into the personal-political debate of a country on the edge of a decision.
- **Hiraeth** (by Buddug James Jones): Explores the decline of Welsh identity and tradition, through one woman's struggle to escape and let go.
- **We Have Fallen** (by Rowan Rutter): A new work about coming home and asking the question of why we choose to fly, beginning the day after 12 planes have fallen from the sky.

**Ed Bartlam**, director of Underbelly says, *'Underbelly is very pleased to be able to work with IdeasTap on this award and to help give a platform for emerging theatre practitioners to showcase their work in the world's largest arts festival.'*

**Further highlights from this years theatre programme include:**

- **Chef**: A gripping story of how one woman went from haute cuisine head chef to a convicted inmate running a prison kitchen. Sabrina Mahfouz's award-winning lyrical style

and Jade Anouka's mesmerising performance make this an extraordinary new show.

- **Spine:** From fast-rising Channel 4 Playwrights' Scheme winner Clara Brennan, comes a hilarious, pan-generational and heartbreaking call to arms for our modern age. Spine charts the explosive friendship between a ferocious, wise-cracking teenager and an elderly East End widow.
- **The Closure of Craig Solly: A Dark Monologue by Russell Kane:**

Russell will be making his Edinburgh acting debut in this bleak and viscerally-twisted monologue, as a fractured man attempting to explain himself. You, the audience, become the friends and family of this psychotic gangster's victims. Explicit violent language throughout.

- **FOMO:** Live from the studios of Radio Forth One, Zoe McDonald and her 12 alter-egos broadcast their own radio programme. A theatre comedy beaming direct to your headphones.
- **How to Disappear Completely:** In this profound, moving and morally complex performance, award-winning lighting designer Itai Erdal demonstrates his approach to theatrical lighting while reflecting on the events that followed his dying mother's request for him to take her life.

**The family programme continues to grow with entertainment for all ages. Highlights this year include:**

- **Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo:** This is the moving tale in the centenary year of the start of WW1 of a young soldier awaiting the firing squad at dawn. He reflects on his short but joyful past and the injustices of war that brought him to the front line.
- **Pirate Gran:** She knits, she bakes, she drinks sherry. If it wasn't for her pet crocodile you'd never guess she

was a pirate! A fabulous, swashbuckling show from the team behind *Stick Man* and *Tiddler*. All aboard me hearties!

- **Human Child:** Inspired by the changeling myths and the poetry of WB Yeats, *Human Child* is a blazing fantasy, adventure story that mixes theatre, puppetry and live music for children aged 8 to 80.
- **Soweto Afro-Pop Opera:** This versatile ensemble will be showcasing pop, a capella and motown, African and classical music accompanied by a string quartet and a four-piece band in a fresh, vibrant township style. Perfect for all the family.

A day at Underbelly, Cowgate wouldn't be complete without a visit to the debauched, no-holds-barred late, comedy extravaganza that is **SPANK!**, featuring the best acts that the Fringe has to offer. If that's not enough entertainment to send you home exhausted, **Edinburgh Comedy Allstars** is set to take over the McEwan Hall on the weekends. Featuring some of the finest comedians of the Fringe along with some surprise guests, Edinburgh Comedy Allstars is guaranteed to have you laughing all the way to your bed. 2013's most popular show, **Hot Dub Time Machine** is again taking over McEwan Hall nightly. Put on your dancing shoes for the best party experience in the world. EVER! Then after a few hours sleep, come join **Morning Gloryville: Rave Your Way Into Day!** An immersive morning dance experience for those who dare to start their day in style!