

Caught Red Handed Theatre – Commonwealth Games/Fringe actor story



By James Miller

It's not every day that I get to perform in front of 40,000 people. All those weeks of intense rehearsal are about to be put to the test and I'm about to be televised to millions around the world. No pressure... Stepping out to the thunderous roar from the crowd at Celtic Park for the Opening Ceremony of the Commonwealth Games filled me with an energy that can only be described as electric. I've never experienced it before and highly doubt I will in quite the same way ever again. Looking up as I performed to a stadium full of people; the lights, the sound, the adrenaline – it was truly a once in a lifetime feeling.

I was so proud of being there and representing the city that I've grown up in and loved all my life. It was superb to welcome the Commonwealth not only to Glasgow but to Scotland, greeting them with open arms and Tunnock's teacakes. While the Games are still in full swing, the Edinburgh Fringe has kicked off and the whole central belt is buzzing. There's currently a vibrant jamboree of sport, theatre, music, comedy and culture whirring away – it's possibly the most fun that's ever been squeezed into the 45-mile stretch!

I now find myself in the fortunate position of being involved in both the Commonwealth Games and the Fringe as I'm gearing up for 'The Villains, The Vote and the Black, Black Oil' – a new play which will mark the Fringe debut of Caught Red-Handed Theatre and will open in this historic Grassmarket.

The Fringe is such a lively time of year and having studied in the capital I am so happy to now finally be a part of that atmosphere with such a hilarious and topical play. Being involved with the first show from a new company makes things even more special – it's an extremely exciting time because it's the first joint venture as independent theatre makers from the creative director, Susan Aitken, and writer, Tom Chalmers, who've teamed up under the banner of Caught Red Handed after working together at Queen Margaret University. Written by Tom specifically as a response to John McGrath's 'The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil' and directed by Susan, the play is an amalgamation of politics, musical theatre and comedy. It's funny, it's clever and we all have a good sing-song – everything I love about Scottish theatre.

The cast have had some interesting conversations and discussions as the show has evolved in rehearsals about what independence might mean for Scotland. Some of us are firmly rooted in the Yes camp while others side with No, and there a few undecideds in there too for good measure. But what we can all agree on is that the vote isn't the final answer. We've come together to make this piece of theatre to explore the debate from different angles; we're not telling the audience that comes to see us what to think or how to vote – Caught Red-Handed's aim is to make fun, engaging pieces of contemporary theatre for the Scottish stage. To me, the play does just that and is the perfect way to look at the upcoming referendum; no matter what way the vote goes we'll still have problems to solve."

Edinburgh-based Caught Red-Handed Theatre bring 'The Villains, The Vote and the Black, Black Oil' to this year's Edinburgh Fringe from August 18th-24th at 20:55 at International 2, Sweet Grassmarket, Fringe Venue 18. Tickets are available from the Box office: 0131 243 3596 and [online](#).

Submitted by [Rachel D'Arcy](#)

