

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Candy Gigi: I'm Not Lonely ****

Candy Gigi: I'm Not Lonely

Heroes @ the Hive

Until Aug 24

I arrived late to Candy Gigi's show, so I missed her opening scene in which she scrubs her teeth with a toilet brush for four minutes before trying to make out with a young male audience member. It was a taster of what was to come from the 2014 New Act of the Year finalist.

Grotesque almost doesn't do justice to the manic, gastronomically in-your-face, clownishly sexualised humour that Candy Gigi Markham, probably fairly safely, can call her own.

With the theme tune from EastEnders blaring out, and a "Please find me funny" poster behind her, the newly single 25-year-old from South Woodford, Essex, wearing her mother's soiled wedding dress in an off-shoulder style, and with lipstick smeared over her face, gorges herself, variously, on red apples and an iceberg lettuce (garnished with parsley). Then she regurgitates them while eyeing up and sitting on the lap of her hapless male victim. "Why don't you kiss me?", she asks plaintively.

"I recently started having some counselling," she blurts out by way of explanation after an awkward silence. "I suffered problems with confidence and self-esteem. I've got too much of it! I love myself and I don't understand why boys don't fancy me. I'm pretty, I'm cute, I'm intelligent."

And then she's at it again, this time bashing the lettuce for good measure. "It's an unpredictable vegetable," she says.

A musical theatre graduate from north London's Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, Markham has a clear eye for the absurd. "You think this is easy?" she screams at the eight-strong audience. "I used to want to be a doctor. Then I woke up one day and thought: 'That's what I want to be: this.'"

A giant inflatable penis, a pig's nose and a can of whipped cream spray also feature, as do some broccoli and a banana, but the guy in the front row manages to hold out, even when his wannabe girlfriend starts grating a baby doll in a last-ditch come-on.

There's a surreal, Pythonesque, refreshingly off-the-wall feel to Markham's deadpan acts of desperation, and sprouting up from the raging ugliness is a resplendent voice which suddenly breaks into "I dreamed a dream" from *Les Misérables*. It's her first Edinburgh solo show, and, if her determination and wild imagination is anything to go by, it won't be her last.

Submitted by [Lee Levitt](#)

