

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review – Torsten The Bareback Saint *****

During the eighties most people listened to Wham or Duran Duran or even the brilliant Culture Club. I was a huge U2 fan but one artist stood above them all for me: Erasure and the wonderful Andy Bell as lead singer. I still have all their albums and never tire of listening to them. Imagine my glee when I found out Andy was coming to the Fringe to play a one man show in a production called Torsten The Bareback Saint.

The show starts off with Andy at the side of the stage dressed as a 'headmaster' with the cape and mortar. He sings the opening song about schooldays while walking onto the stage all the while images and videos of school scenes appear behind him.

For the next hour we are treated to Andy singing songs with titles including Teacher Teacher, Bingo Hall Baby and Weston-Super-Mare. There is no chat to the audience, there is no banter as you would normally find at an Erasure gig because put simply this is I would say is as far removed for an Erasure gig as you will find.

Andy himself has been quoted as saying "this is the biggest challenge of my career" and I believe he does extremely well to convey all the emotions of the character from happiness to sadness, anger and loss. Bell really gets all of these across to the audience.

At times he looks so vulnerable and alone you can't help but feel for him. The character Torsten is described as a "polysexual semi immortal". He has had many lovers and people die, but he has lived on. The songs themselves are very good, some of them quite short. Bell fits in some costume changes

throughout the show too in this hour of great musical theatre.

Special mention for Barney Ashton-Bullock who wrote the show, and also a mention to Christopher Frost who plays keyboards and saxophone.

Torsten The Bareback Saint runs until the 16th August at Assembly George Square Studios number 1 at 6.30pm

Tickets are priced at £16