

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015 REVIEW – Lynn Ruth Miller: Get A Grip ***



It is very hot in Studio 5 of C venues: C Nova.

‘Anyone who falls asleep, I forgive them...this is going to turn into a mass striptease in 5 minutes’.

Well luckily it doesn’t, as **Lynn Ruth Miller** is beautifully attired in white floaty dress, white shoes and pink top. She is – as she is happy to tell us – 81 years old, ‘the oldest stand-up comedian performing on either side of the Atlantic’, a multi-award winner who only began her comedy career ten years ago. She used to live in California but last year – yes, just last year – she moved to Brighton. She’s a writer and singer too. Tonight she’s here to talk about fear and how to deal with it.



In **Get A Grip**, Miller tells us about some of the things that have scared her during her long and colourful life – and how

she came to terms with them. Overarching almost every anecdote is the presence of Mrs Miller senior, a sad, fearful, highly critical woman who frequently threatened to send her daughter 'back to the Indians where you'll have to live in a teepee and eat corn all day.'

'She was not my friend'

– a poignant understatement if ever there was one. Not surprising, really, that Lynn Ruth grew up feeling insecure and worthless, terrified of authority figures, unable to stand up to bullies, desperate to please.



Another misery memoir then? Well yes – and no.

Lynn Ruth illustrates her hang-ups with stories, and for every heartbreaking tale there is a snappy one-liner – from childhood road trips through the pre-Martin Luther King South to issues with college roommates in Michigan, encounters with the police (who *used* to be her friends – now she's not so sure...).

Then it moves to the West Coast and life in trailer-park Texas. This whirlwind tour of selected episodes from eight decades well – if not always happily – lived is as entertaining as it is touching. There are even family photos, brought along to prove it's all true – when she can put her hand on them. 'I can't find that one so you'll just have to imagine'. Lynn Ruth is nothing if not resourceful, in performance as in life; she's been everything from a teacher to a a call handler for what she thought was a dating service. (It wasn't). And despite all the grief she's come out stronger;

'I realised I didn't need anyone to validate me – not even my mother'.

There are a few wobbly bits in this show; Lynn Ruth does occasionally forget where she's going with a story – but then who doesn't? (under 30s need not reply...), the room is much too hot, even on a typical Edinburgh August afternoon, and the noise from the foyer outside is a tad distracting.

Despite all that, this feisty woman holds our attention and stays firmly on the sharp side of schmaltz; Lynn Ruth Miller's definitely Got A Grip.



Lynne Ruth Miller: *Get A Grip* is at Venue 145, C venues – C Nova, India Buildings, Victoria Street, at 6pm daily until 31st August. Tickets are available via the Edinburgh Festival Fringe website [here](#).