

Edinburgh Fringe Review: Nina Conti – In Your Face ****



The magic of Nina Conti and that cheeky, potty-mouthed rascal of a Monkey sidekick of hers, had the 750-strong audience packed inside the Pleasance Grand rolling with laughter in what is one of the funniest shows at the Fringe this year.

Some of us in the sell-out crowd were introduced to the dark art of ventriloquism courtesy of Keith Harris and Orville or perhaps Roger De Courcey and Nookie Bear on the big screen during the innocence of our youth.

In Conti, the Fringe has a talent and skill that is still as 'in your face' as it was 15 years ago when she made her debut.

Her stage buddy Monkey gains a degree of sympathy from the audience early doors as he performs "My Face Hurts When I Play Guitar". Our collective faces hurt from chuckling as the poor puppet's furry chops were used to rattle out the two verse song.

Monkey is the main tool of Conti's trade. Also on the stage was a rail of plastic face masks that were used throughout the course of a belly-laughter fuelled sixty minutes as Conti enticed a host of audience members from the front row to join her on stage.

Manipulated behind the mask for our enjoyment, these unsuspecting souls allow Conti to seize control. Hilarity unfolded as she jumped between accents – from her fondly loved favourite Australian twang, to the finely honed Glaswegian accent, perhaps gleaned from her actor father Tom, which she

used to play out a scene involving great sports in the shape of Diane and David from across the M8.

Audience interaction is only as good sometimes as the willingness of the participants. Thursday night's assembled punters delighted the crowd with their impromptu dance routine, randomly choreographed by the quick thinking Conti.

[tweet_box design="default"]The only disappointment of the night was when the lights came up and we all had to go home.[/tweet_box]

Nina Conti: In Your Face, runs at Pleasance Courtyard, 8pm, until 28th August (not 16th)