

# Five Edinburgh Festival Fringe Questions for... McCleary & Blair



*Ross McCleary and Andrew Blair*

Ross McCleary and Andrew Blair have noticed something. People love pandas, but they don't care for poetry. Maybe if people could see poetry from pandas, they would like that more? These stalwarts of the Edinburgh spoken word scene (and PBH Spoken Word 'Best Double Act' winners) have decided to put that proposition to the test. From 21-28 August, they'll be dressing as pandas and delivering poetry for PHB Free Fringe audiences at The Banshee Labyrinth.

In a break from exhausting rehearsals and *Life on Earth* binge-watching, McCleary and Blair agreed to submit to *The Edinburgh Reporter's* Five Questions...

1. *What are you doing to prepare for performing a show as pandas? Getting high out of your minds on eucalyptus?*

We should probably break it to everyone that the panda stuff is not going to be big on verisimilitude. Pandas rarely, if ever, put on spoken word shows. Mainly they just eat things with the minimal amount of effort. I'm not saying a sympathetic reviewer wouldn't appreciate us doing that, just that it's not a really big aspect of the show.

2. *Broadway Baby has described your double act as being like 'Billy Crystal and Eeyore'. Who's who? And why?*

Andrew is Eeyore, Ross is Billy Crystal (although to be honest it can vary from poem to poem). It's because Andrew is deadpan (also he has the edge on vowels) and Ross has a lot of nervous

energy (plus he's seen as a pair of steady hands when it comes to hosting the Oscars).

3. *Why should people who are scared of poetry come to see McCleary and Blair Panda to the Audience?*

Quite a lot of it is actually prose.

4. *What's your favourite kind of fringe?*

The tassly bits on curtains or bell-pulls you only seem to get in Agatha Christie adaptations. By quite an astounding segue, our show is about death, but unlike Agatha Christie adaptations you won't spend it going 'Ooh, what have I seen him in?'

5. *Anything else we should know about McCleary and Blair Panda to the Audience?*

It also features art, science, and a fair whack of Robert Pattinson. Everyone who attends has the option of filling in a questionnaire about their expectations of spoken word and poetry shows. We're doing this in order to get a broad understanding of how they're perceived. This is mainly because we're hoping to use this information to create a new show (or at least use the common themes that come up in the answers to manipulate more people into coming to see us next time).

*McCleary and Blair Panda to the Audience is part of PBH's Free Fringe at The Banshee Labyrinth | Aug 21-28 | 21:50-22:50*