

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 – Lewis Schaffer: What Have You Heard? **

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Laughing Horse @ The Counting House, until Aug 26

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It's a bit awkward when you're asked to leave a show by a comedian you know who doesn't want you to write it all down but to go by "the feel".



Yet when that comedian is Lewis Schaffer, the Brooklyn-born southeast Londoner, of whom Chortle says on his flyer, "Unique combination of supreme arrogance and gnawing self-doubt" and paranoia is his shtick, it's best to stand firm. Or so I figured.

"Quintessential Schaffer", I offered up and it got a few laughs.

The trouble with the show (apart from the annoying scribbler) was that "the best comedian in Britain", to use his own words, who looks "like George Clooney – from the eyebrows up", again his words, was exhausted. Perhaps because of that he didn't adequately explain its main themes: rumour and abuse. Not, it has to be said, the most comically fertile of areas but a brave move to focus on, given cultural taboos.

Consequently it soared and dipped alarmingly, with the glassy-eyed 61-year-old who once got "five stars from The Scotsman"

jousting superbly and disastrously by turns with his audience, dissing his “paedoeey, creepy posters ... I’m saying don’t come and see my show”, he drawled darkly, riffing as it were on Harvey Weinstein and ending up asking complete strangers: “Do you like me?”

A couple of middle-aged ladies left. It was as if he was imploding before our eyes.

“No,” came the reply.

“But you started off liking me.”

“Not really. Do you want people to like you?”

As he said while flyering before the show: “Lewis Schaffer: he’s sometimes funny.”