

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2018 REVIEW – Jew-0-Rama****

The premise behind this post-lunch show is to bring together the best Jewish (and Jew-ish) stand-up comedy in the country and it amply does what it says on the tin.

Jew-ish, because not all the comedians are Jewish; though, having qualified on account of their neuroses and/or paranoia or in the case of first-up Jake Baker the “living-with-the-guy-who-booked-the-show” category, they can claim entry. And as compere Philip Simon, 39, from Borehamwood in Hertfordshire, quipped, “We control the media so we might as well let them in.”



The endearingly offbeat Baker, 28, twice nominated for the BBC new comedy award, started by reading out a review from his show in Brighton. “I could listen to his jokes all day,” he said, and then paused before adding, “and not laugh. It’s from the guardian. Not the paper. My mum.”

Baker, from Dorset, in south-west England, has great comic timing and an engagingly whimsical mind, which, as he went on to relate, has yet to find its female match in the online dating world. He also had the advantage, for this show at least, of sounding like the Jewish comedian Mark Maier.

Next up was the 28-year-old north Londoner Aaron Simmonds, the Jewish comedian of the year, who has cerebral palsy. “You’re right, it’s the sexiest of all the disabilities,” he said, before taking the “failed-dating stories” baton from Baker and driving it on to the next base (in a tale about a voice-activated car) in an agreeably self-mocking manner.

Aaron Levene, 43, a former pupil of Carmel College, the former Jewish public school, who created the show, continued the dating theme, having met his fiancée on Tinder. “She told me she couldn’t be bothered to swipe left any more” he said. A

Buddhist Jew or “bujew”, as he called himself, from Camden, north London, he had a good line in wordplay and a self-deprecating, acidic wit.

If you are ever at a loose end and want to witness a joyously silly impression of a duck sidling up to someone (in this case an obliging woman in the audience) with a fistful of bread in their hand, the wobble-lipped Joel Sanders is your man. The deliciously unsexy impression by Sanders, who grew up in Ruislip, west London, and now lives on a canal boat, is as peerless as he is paunchy.

Sanders, 51, makes comic capital out of his unorthodox lifestyle with his waspish wit. “I told my dad I’m going to live on a boat. He said: ‘Jews don’t live on boats. I said: ‘What about Noah?’ He said: ‘He was a liberal Jew.’ That’s when I learnt about hypocrisy,” he said, before going on to talk about the family’s traditional non-kosher Chinese takeaway meal.

Wrapping it up was Ivor Dembina, the twice-married veteran Jewish gagster from Waterloo in London: socialist, 67, and single again. The bespectacled, baseball cap-wearing Dembina – who was part of the new alternative comedy scene with the likes of Julian Clary, Mark Thomas and Jo Brand in the late 1970s and 1980s – was on Tinder, too, he said, lining up a joke like a boxer about to land the killer punch. His shortlist? “It’s called Tinder’s list.”

Opium Alternative Bar, 71 Cowgate, until Aug 25

[Tickets here](#)