

# **Fringe 2024 – Pleasance Theatre open 40th anniversary year with a Gala**

**The Pleasance Theatre Trust celebrate their 40th anniversary in 2024 and today's launch gave a flavour of the incredible programme presented across the Dome, Courtyard and EICC as well as highlighting the Pleasance's commitment to artist support, access and welfare.**

Opening the show were the dancing birds and catchy tunes of *The Emu War: A New Musical*, a new comedy musical inspired by the true events of The Great Emu War of 1932. This bonza tale of human futility follows six characters caught up in the battle but, who will triumph, man or emu?



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The gala was hosted by Edinburgh Comedy Award Best Show nominee Ania Magliano who is back at the Fringe this year with *Forgive Me Father*. You know when you're trying to wee on a night out and you're interrupted by a random girl who insists on telling you all her secrets even though you've never met? Imagine that, but she has a microphone and she's playing at the Courtyard.





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Acclaimed comedian Kemah Bob gave us a peek of her unmissable debut stand-up show. Seen on QI, Richard Osman's House of Games, Jonathan Ross' Comedy Club, and many more, she'll be in Baby Grand every day with Miss Fortunate.



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Blind Summit – makers of Fringe hits The Table and Citizen Puppet – pulled back the covers on puppet sexuality in contemporary Britain with an extract from their show The Sex Lives of Puppets.



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What do puppets look like naked? Fancy some no strings sex? What are you doing with your hands? Not so much the 'birds and bees' more the 'nuts and bolts' of puppet intimacy.

She was in the Grand this morning and that's where you can find her everyday with *Whose Face Is It Anyway*. The virtuoso ventriloquist, BAFTA nominee and British Comedy Award winner Nina Conti is presenting an unparalleled, unscripted new show that delves deep into who we are, hijacking faces to spark a bold, hysterical reality warp.

Winner of *Drag Race UK*, Ginger Johnson swapped her stilettos for safety goggles for a death-defying leap from the runway to the real world. We saw big hair, big heart and big laughs as Britain's ditziest daredevil showed us just how far she will go for a round of applause.



Ginger Johnson

Melanie Bracewell brought her signature style of goofy, punchline-heavy comedy that has earned her sell-out shows all around the world. Star of Taskmaster NZ, this multi-award winning comedian is making her Fringe debut with a month in the Baby Grand, giving us her story of revenge. And justice.



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Anthony Alderson, director of the Pleasance Theatre Trust, spoke about the Great Tapestry of Scotland, considering how across 40 years the Pleasance has woven its own tapestry and a vibrant history.

He said: "Our tapestry, although maybe a little more yellow in hue, is composed of countless patterns, textures and colours and I want to pay tribute to the incredible artists and risk takers that weave such glorious stories in this loom of dreams. Their creativity and their work of endless invention is why we flock to this place and why I am so grateful to once again be presenting such a wonderful canvas of work."





Anthony Alderson © 2024 Martin McAdam

Regarded as the greatest quick-change artist in the world, two-time Olivier Award nominated Italian illusionist Arturo Brachetti popped onto the stage to wish the Pleasance a very happy birthday. His show SOLO sees over 50 characters come to life through astonishing illusions, mind boggling transformations and mesmerising magic.





Arturo Brachetti © 2024 Martin McAdam

The gala closed with musical supernova Jazz Emu (Telegraph's 26th Funniest Comedian of the 21st Century) who is back with a brand-new show, with a full live band. At long last, a chance for Jazz Emu to secure his long-coveted knighthood.



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Jazz Emu











The Pleasance Theatre Trust is running its Welfare Programme again in partnership with PlayWell. Marking this milestone anniversary, the Pleasance has also become the first venue at the Fringe to establish a dedicated Welfare Department within the festival's framework.

The department, spearheaded by PlayWell's founder and independent welfare consultant Lauren Silver, will provide support to over 800 participants, including the senior management team, volunteers and artists, granting them access to free counselling clinics, training and workshops as well as a range of other resources and support. Addressing the ongoing mental health crisis in the sector, the department will implement a comprehensive and tangible welfare plan with a focus on

preventative and holistic care, empowering participants to experience the festival in a healthy and robust way.

Open captions at the Gala were provided by Claire Hill cementing the Pleasance's commitment to

accessibility.

For 2024, 31 shows in the programme are offering captioning with 35 providing access provision of some kind. With the support of the Edinburgh Airport Community Fund, the organisation has purchased new hearing loops and the Ulverscroft Foundation has supported the purchase of an Audio Description Kit which, this year, is being used by Ugly Bucket to provide audio description for every performance of their show Stuffed.

The Pleasance is also part of [Love the Fringe](#), a new membership scheme launched by a group of venues and artists to allow you to see more shows than ever before at the best prices. Membership offers exclusive discounts, free tickets and perks across Edinburgh.