

Hot Topics » [Northern Rock \(http://www.journallive.co.uk/tags/northern-rock/\)](http://www.journallive.co.uk/tags/northern-rock/)

[Raymond Scott \(http://www.journallive.co.uk/tags/raymond-scott/\)](http://www.journallive.co.uk/tags/raymond-scott/)

[Find Your New Home \(http://www.neur1.co.uk/1389\)](http://www.neur1.co.uk/1389)

[Read Regional \(http://www.journallive.co.uk/culture-newcastle/read-regional/\)](http://www.journallive.co.uk/culture-newcastle/read-regional/)

[All Topics... \(http://www.journallive.co.uk/tags/\)](http://www.journallive.co.uk/tags/)

Pick of the talent at this month's Fringe

Aug 14 2010

[\(http://www.journallive.co.uk/culture-newcastle/culture-latest-news/2010/08/14/\)](http://www.journallive.co.uk/culture-newcastle/culture-latest-news/2010/08/14/)

by Karen Wilson, The Journal

**There are laughs aplenty at this year's Edinburgh Fringe.
Karen Wilson reveals her comedy picks.**

[Add a comment \(#siterecommendationsWidget-bottom\)](#)

[Recommend \(#none\)](#)

COMEDY has made up the bulk of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe programme for years now, with most visitors taking in big names from TV and budding newbies alike. My Fringe experience was no different.

Firstly, let's get the "women aren't as funny as men" debate out of the way. If you're still on the fence, check out Broad Comedy at The Assembly, a troupe of six American women performing comedy songs and sketches that could rival Flight of the Conchords and Stephen Lynch – but perhaps not Tim Minchin.

Most of the song titles are too filthy to print and their targets are of the right wing, gun-toting, Bible-bashing variety.

My favourites were Saving my Hymen for Jesus, Clingy Girlfriend and a hilarious rap finale called Soccer Mom Ho.

The sketches inbetween were just as good. One dramatised the moment of conception to illustrate it's women who do the choosing. How much would you love to tell someone "my job involves dressing up as a giant sperm"?

Laura Solon was another broad who impressed. The second woman to win the Perrier award in 2005, her storytelling quest The Owl of Steven was like a one-woman Royston Vasey, with Solon jumping between all the parts seamlessly.

"It may look like dicking about, but this is my career," she said, before morphing into a parade of grotesque characters, such as Barry and Valerie, the Isle of Steven's warring councillors whose bitter hatred for one another spawns some cracking bile-filled one-liners.



It was clever, inventive and incredibly polished given its wordiness, but it only raised smiles and chuckles rather than belly laughs. And towards the end, I was starting to wish she'd just find the bloody owl!

Having won last year's "best joke of the Fringe" award from TV channel Dave, I had high hopes for Dan Antopolski. OK, the joke wasn't that great – "Hedgehogs. Why can't they just share the hedge?" – but he's been nominated for the Perrier award three times and has a raft of four and five-star reviews.

I wasn't disappointed. Sounding a lot like David Baddiel, Antopolski arrived with his Japanese servant carrying the hallowed Dave trophy and launched into a cracking set.

He answered a raft of seemingly unanswerable questions, such as "War: What is it good for?" – territorial expansion, apparently – came up with an unprintable new TV format in the same vein as Date My Mom and used Maisie the Mouse book covers – he's a dad of two – to illustrate the alternative story of Maisie's descent into drugs and prostitution.

Ending on a song about owning a laser, that poked fun at his geekiness, Antopolski proved he has all the ingredients for successful stand-up.

Wanting to take a punt on an act I'd never heard of, I headed to the Underbelly for Marcel Lucont, a parody of a Gauloise-smoking, red- wine-drinking, Anglo-hating Frenchman played by Englishman Alexis Dubus.

Describing himself as a lover, raconteur and nihilist, Lucont arrived on stage in turtleneck and lounge suit with no shoes, giving short shrift to the latecomers who'd been tucking into a falafel beforehand.

As he graced us with tales of losing his virginity and passages from his self-published autobiography, an artist drew pictures of audience members in fantasy poses.

While many acts bombard the audience with a high-energy assault, like puppies desperate to be loved, Lucont gave off an air of nonchalance, retaining his disdainful arrogance throughout. He even managed to get laughs from a well-timed raised eyebrow.

A masterclass in low-energy stand-up, the small cave-like venue, with drips coming from the ceiling, was actually perfect for this act. However, while Dubus has perfected his characterisation, the material does need some work. But what do I know? I'm just a stoopeed Eeengleshwoman.

If you're on a budget, the Free Fringe features over 200 shows in 22 venues. I managed to get into Robin Ince's show, Carl Sagan is Still My God at Canon's Gait although half the queue was turned away, so arrive early.

The man behind alternative atheist Christmas extravaganza Nine Lessons and Carols for Godless People – dubbed "Nerdstock" – Ince has a knack for making stand-up out of science.

He was joined by a chippy Josie Long, who somehow managed to extract some good material from taking her maths A-Level as an adult, and Baba Brinkman who romped home with a rap about the science of human behaviour, which managed to be both educational and pretty funny.

With all this just an hour-and-a-half away by train and 2,453 shows to choose from, who can resist escaping to Edinburgh this August?

The festival runs until August 30.

Add a comment

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

Send a notification to my Twitter account

Submit