

Gunpowder**Stars And Hearts—PTE Studio**

It seems the venue tech has a complaint about this show. It's not that it's particularly hard on him. There are fairly few sound cues, and the props consist of one chair (practically a second cast member, it even gets its own round of applause at the end). No, the problem is that it goes overtime, because the multitasking Jayson Macdonald keeps having to pause and wait for the laughter to die down.

The show's premise is clever. Jayson Macdonald the actor, Jayson Macdonald the director, and Jayson Macdonald the writer are three different people (often in conflict), with the latter two among the suspects in the former's murder; this is investigated by a bumbling detective who is slowly realizing he is a fictional character in a play.

This year, however, a clever premise alone doesn't seem to be enough for a show to rise above the crowd in terms of publicity. But unlike what I've been hearing about some other shows, this one more than lives up to its initial promise. This was the first of Macdonald's many shows I've actually gotten around to seeing, but I'm going to make sure it isn't the last.

Jeff Heikkinen

unADULTeRATED me**Rachelle Fordyce—Conservatory**

Winnipeg actor Rachelle Fordyce comes of age with this enchanting, touching, and often-hilarious tale of an anxious clown named Fizzy Tiff who has driven herself to the edge of nervous apoplexy over her pending date with a young man (unseen) who she thinks will be her one-and-only.

So obsessed is Fizzy with this date being a complete success, she writes a script and seeks a young male volunteer from the audience to "rehearse" with. This sets off a skit that forms the major portion of the show, most of which had the audience howling with laughter. (And kudos to her Thursday volunteer, Colin, for a job well done.)

I have seen Fordyce in previous shows, but this one in particular impressed me by allowing her to display an even broader range of acting abilities (notably her physical comedy), in addition to her inventive wit and comic timing. The role of a clown suits Fordyce perfectly. I was also blown away by her moxie and her courage.

She had the audience on their feet for an initial standing ovation several minutes before the show ended.

Robin Chase

This show has everything people think of when they think of the fringe: a quirky script, clowning, audience participation, music, and nudity.

Some people are turned off by any show in which the performer uses a red nose, but I suspect that these people would be thrilled by Fordyce's operatic singing. (The audience stood up and applauded after this number.) You can't count on this every night; but when I attended, the person plucked from the audience as a stand-in for Stephan was more than up to the challenge of playing off Fordyce.

Kevin Longfield

Stuff**Ragpickers—Battered Suitcases**

The name says it all. This play was about stuff, and what a play about stuff it was.

With the combination of singing and comedy, along with some performance art, this play made itself awesome, for lack of a better word.

The two guys doing this show really knew how to entertain an audience, and it was fun from beginning to end. Go and see this show. And bring something—you get to see it smashed!

Arden Pruden

Supporting the JENNY!

PREMIER GREG SELINGER & THE NDP CAUCUS

