

# REVIEWS



## PINKY BEECROFT: MAINSTREAM FUNK MELBOURNE FRINGE

The endless, delightful silliness of Pinky Beecroft – sometimes sneaky, often outright – will keep you snickering and beaming for the full hour you're with him. But later that night, or the next day, or whenever it is that you next find yourself all alone, the emotional kick of this remarkable show will hit and you'll realise Pinky belongs to the same class of philosopher twit as Spike Milligan. The alleged structure of the evening is to spin a "wheel of topics", with Beecroft telling stories to match. But his enormous human charisma tends naturally toward the meandering monologue kind of deal, and the wheel is often ignored as Pinky pursues intriguing tangents or, more often, simply abandons a story

halfway through because he just remembered an even funnier one. Tonight he told about being stalked by an overaffectionate pastry chef, the raft of physical afflictions that have hit him in the past year, and tripping balls with an octogenarian limo driver in Townsville cemetery. He proselytised for the joys of "spooning with a softie," and analysed the generic anatomy of regional Australia's many "premier night spots". A gently devastating (but still funny) letter written to his stepmother about his father is perhaps the best moment. The content is bound to change from night to night, as Beecroft clearly has a thousand stories to tell. And shit, does he know how to tell 'em. Get a double dose if you can.

**Johnny Pineapples**

Running at North Melbourne Town Hall until Saturday 13 October

## THE UNSPOKEN WORD IS 'JOE' MELBOURNE FRINGE

From the moment you step foot into the tiny La Mama Theatre, it is unclear what exactly is part of the play and what isn't. It continues this way until the very end of the performance. Zoey Dawson's *The Unspoken Word Is 'Joe'* is best viewed with as little prior knowledge of what it entails as possible. All you need to know is that it's about how one woman deals with a shambolic break-up, and that it's raw, clever, deceptive, meta and keeps you constantly guessing. Its strength lies not in its story, however, but in the way it unfolds; fourth walls are broken, scenes fluidly warp from one into the next, characters convincingly drift in and out of

reality. For a play about something inherently sad, it elicits consistent laughter, both uncomfortable and enthusiastic. As things go from bad to worse, somehow tragedy becomes comedy, in an honest and relatable way. Nikki Shiels excels as the heartbroken, distraught playwright, as does Annie Last as the hyper-extroverted "crazy girl". Watch out for Georgina Capper's inspiring, very thorough introduction. This play cannot really be explained without ruining the experience, and therein lies its genius. It will leave you delightedly confused, questioning what's real and what's not, and almost wondering whether it was really a play at all.

**Stephanie Liew**

Running at La Mama Theatre to Sunday 14 October



## KISSING AND F\*%KING UP MELBOURNE FRINGE

"And I pushed her up against the stone wall," he said with a cheeky smile. "She was between a rock and a hard place." This hot and heavy makeout session with a German backpacker was one of 11 storytelling monologues that came alive in Brunswick Green tonight. Bawdy, playful and masterfully performed, this immersive sequence of tales follows the romantic life of an unnamed protagonist from his awkward, fumbling love affairs and emotional disconnection to an eventual longing for deep attachment. Each monologue was performed by a different actor playing interpretations of the same dorky, pseudo-confident wannabe ladies-man. Performances were inviting and funny, with particularly strong consistency from the three

female members of the ensemble. However, these vignettes were self-referentially just that: only a series of monologues. Although linked as a chronological tale, the interplay of the monologues was stilted and I would have liked to have seen a broader presentational framework to tie this narrative together more strongly. Some performances were stylistically out of place – over-directed and better suited to a theatre than a bar. Broden Kelly's outstanding example of seeming like he was just an average guy, in a bar, telling a story. But despite the structural teething problems, this was a thoroughly enjoyable show with stunning acting across the board and I highly recommend everyone to check it out before it closes.

**James Danielm**

Running at various venues throughout the Fringe until Friday 12 October



## ART STARTER

Five minutes with **GRAHAM HANCOCK**

**What lessons can we learn from Ancient civilisations that might have been forgotten by modern humans?** That life is magical, that the universe is enchanted, that the earth is a precious garden of experience, and that it is an incredible opportunity for the soul to be born in a human body.

**Your earlier work helped to bring the knowledge of the Mayan calendar to the western world. What do believe will happen in December 2012?** I don't believe anything will happen on 21

December 2012. The Mayan calendar is cyclical and what it predicts for that date is not the end of the world, as some foolishly suppose, but the end of a great cycle of the human story and the beginning of the next. What I find interesting is that the start date of the current cycle of the calendar is in 3114 BC with the end date in 2012 (ie, a period of 5,126 years) and this period does span the time of emergence, dominance and decline of big, centralised, hierarchical states; big, centralised hierarchical religions; and big, centralised, hierarchical corporations. The existing world order based on these controlling hierarchies is undoubtedly in a terminal decay

and something new – hopefully something better that honours individual sovereignty, that nurtures love rather than hatred, fear and suspicion, and that has reverence for the cosmos – is in the process of being birthed.

**Do you believe that tours like the Origins Of Consciousness are a good forum for discussing these ideas?** Yes, an excellent forum. The new consciousness that is being born in the world is based around communities of ideas in which like-minded people can get together to reimagine reality. I hope the tour will act as a catalyst for



new and better ways of thinking about the past and the future.

**WHAT:** Origins Of Consciousness Tour

**WHEN & WHERE:** Saturday 13 October, Melbourne Uni and Sunday 14 October, Abbotsford Convent

# BANGS? NO, FRINGE

## WITH SIMON EALES

The main reason this last weekend of Melbourne Fringe activity was so epic was Friday night's *Silent Dinner Party*. Honi Ryan has been running three-course dinners where no linguistic communication of any kind is allowed across the world for a while now. I went with a mate; we got absolutely plastered, dressed a stranger in a pirate suit made of sticky tape, ate beans and poached pear and I can't remember leaving. The next morning I went back to reclaim my drunkenly abandoned backpack. I spoke to Ryan, who was in the middle of watching footage of the previous night's dinner, where a couple spontaneously got engaged. For her the dinner parties are a chance for people to connect in "Real Space", unmediated by media or text.

"In Beirut it was politicised, and I felt the presence of the silent witness or the danger of silencing the people," she recalls. "In New York it became cabaret with each person's time to shine in front of the group. In Melbourne this year I experienced a heartfelt warmth and sense of romance in the connections strangers made very quickly with each other."

I felt like I was in *Lord Of The Flies*. Take language away and things get messy. Literally. Ryan said she spent the entire day trying to get sticky tape off everything we had put it on the night before. The rest of my week was sedate, by comparison.

Monday, I wandered up to RMIT's Brunswick campus to check out *Artland*. It was like they were exterminating, not a soul around. Big weekend maybe. Student visual and installation art pieces were dotted around the campus: an arts and crafts weather-station here; big, pink fabric worm inflated and animated by a building's air-duct there. Daisy Catterall's little installation, *The God Of Design*, is essentially a shrine commemorating the Baillieu



government's funding cuts to arts education. Ants were pouring-over and disintegrating the sugar skulls that formed part of the structure. Nature chiming-in for an ironic twist, I reckon.

*The Séance*, by new-comers No Show, is not so much a séance as a big ol' piss-take. Starlet worship and séances themselves are made ridiculous... An open mind you must indeed have, including if you were expecting a real séance. They did very successfully bring Mariah Carey back from the dead, though.

Then it was a battle of the best Fringe storytellers. Sarah Collins and Attic Erratic's *Choir Girl* delivers a tale of jealousy, romance, and alto singing, backed by a disturbing chorus of female choristers. Think 12 brides of Chucky singing scales whilst fabric shopping in a dreamscape. Collins's skill is in her bright-eyed, mock-innocent satire. She's never common but always close-to-home.

Kiwi Gregory Cooper chimes in with his *Heroic Faun No. One*, about his not-so heroic real-life experience as an extra in *The Chronicles Of Namia: The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe*. The story's super tight and unfolds playfully. And he tells why Tilda Swinton is a minx.

But my highlight was Pinky Beecroft's show, *Mainstream Freak*. The former Machine Gun Fellatio lead singer, and prolific writer, is eloquent, self-deprecatory, and tells a ripper yarn. Beecroft rambles and improvises his way through the drug-fucked, sweet, and hilariously life-threatening tales of his life. Each show's random and differs night-to-night. I'd totes go back.

# CULTURAL CRINGE

## WITH REBECCA COOK

Imagine *King Kong The Musical*, it sounds a bit like *Jaws The Opera*, or *Alien Live On Stage* – that is, it sounds virtually impossible, unless you're the folks from Global Creatures and you've just made the arena spectaculars *Walking With Dinosaurs* and *How To Train Your Dragon*. Then you say: "Creating a one-tonne, six-metre tall silverback to perform in a theatre with a proscenium arch, hell yeah, we'll give that a crack!" Needless to say everything about this new theatrical production, which will have its world premiere in Melbourne in June next year, is massive. From the size of the set and the most technologically-advanced puppet in the world to the 49-strong cast members (actors, dancers, singers, circus performers and puppeteers), and the crew of 76 right through to the musicians involved – Massive Attack, The Avalanches, Elbow and Sarah McLachlan. The media launch on Sunday arvo was even massive; the Ballroom at the Regent (the show will be in the theatre upstairs) was packed with Melbourne's theatre community, there was a live orchestra, and the event was introduced by the massively popular Myf Warhurst. Producer and CEO of Global Creatures, Carmen Pavlovic has spent five years bringing the big gorilla to the stage. "As I really got to think about it I became more and more captivated by the fact that it was a love story and I could see the musical possibilities in that very strongly." The vision Pavlovic had for the music was born through

a conversation with her brother over fish and chips several years ago. Of course, turning these conversations into a reality is a lot easier if your brother is Stephen Pavlovic of Modular People, the record label and promoter. Key to the project is composer Marius de Vries (*Moulin Rouge, Romeo & Juliet*) who is tasked with revamping 1930 Broadway classics such as *I Wanna Be Loved By You* and integrating the new work into what Carmen hopes will create a score that will "travel through genre and time in a way that is contemporary and redefining." After hearing three of the songs performed live at the launch, I'd say she's achieved what she set out to do. The all-Australian cast were announced by American director Daniel Kramer at the launch and they include doyenne of musical theatre Queenie van de Zandt, stage veteran Richard Piper and Esther Hannaford (*Hairspray*) playing Ann Darrow. Kramer was at his wit's end trying to fill the role of the devious filmmaker Carl Denham, when he was asked to have a quick listen to a guy brought in to do some understudy work. With that one casual audition, Adam Lyon effectively went from community theatre in Bendigo to taking the lead in what will be the biggest show in town next year. The launch ended with a sneak peak of the real lead, Kong, in action in the workshop – or the 'maternity ward' as Warhurst described it. If the work in progress visuals are anything to go by, *King Kong* is going to grab Melbourne by the Arts Centre spire and BOOM!