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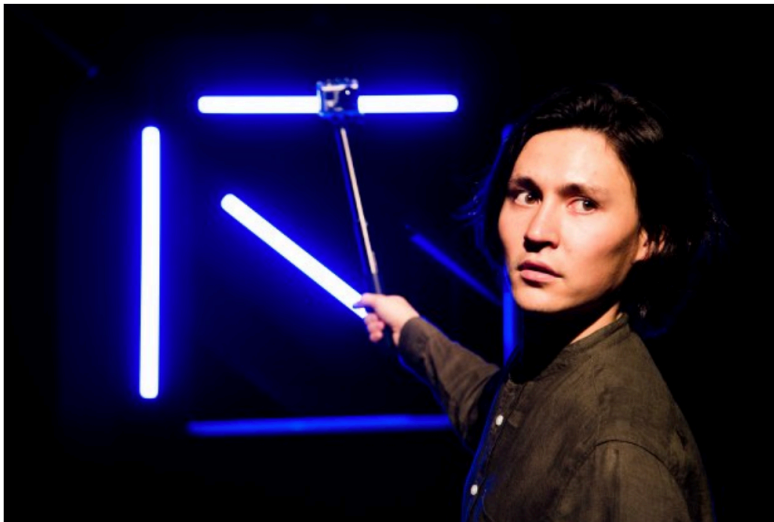
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## OTOSOTR ●●●●●

David Kettle

8 August 2018

This article is from 2018.



SIMILAR ARTICLES

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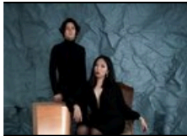
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Performing behind and with an electronic keyboard, Ogay uses narration, music and song to convey his powerful monologue, supported by a grid of neon lights that flick evocatively between colours to reflect the show's themes and moods. *OTOSOTR* is a gripping, revelatory show. Listen hard and you'll even get to hear what its title stands for.

*Underbelly Cowgate, until 26 Aug (not 13), 6.40pm, £10-£11 (£9-£10).*

## OTOSOTR →



●●●●●

Anatoliy Ogay and Tatyana Kim A story of one of the 200,000 Koreans who were deported from the Russian-Korean border by the Soviet government in 1937. It is an exploration of the life of a Soviet soldier of Korean descent Anatoliy Ogay. This is a journey of a WWII hero who fought Nazis in Berlin in 1945, survived the...

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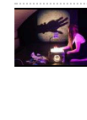
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
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The tragic life of silent movie star Mabel Normand is the subject of Kit Finnie's one-woman show

 **Mistero Buffo ●●●●●** (22 Aug 2018)  
Political rage meets Le Coq

 **Gulliver Returns ●●●●●** (22 Aug 2018)  
Mental health explored through a classic novel

 **Don't Tell Me Not To Fly ●●●●●** (22 Aug 2018)  
Big West End hits, female empowerment and anecdotes from a series of stage stars

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# DAVID KETTLE

writer and editor

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Hi. I'm David Kettle. Welcome to my website, and thanks for visiting.

I'm an experienced arts writer and editor, based in Edinburgh.

I am a music critic for *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Scotsman* and *The Arts Desk*, and resources editor at *Music Teacher* magazine. I also write regularly for *The List* and *The Strad* magazines, and I was programmes editor for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra from 2013 to 2018.

My work has also appeared in numerous other publications including *The Times*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Classical Music*, *International Piano*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Scotland on Sunday*, *Folk Roots*, *The Great Outdoors*, *Sinfini Music* and *The Edinburgh Reporter*.

I was one of the team behind the launch of Universal Music's Sinfini Music, commissioning and editing hundreds of composer and artist articles for the site. I also launched Amati Magazine online.

I have also undertaken project management, writing and editing work for numerous arts organisations, including

- Edinburgh International Festival
- BBC Proms
- Scottish Opera
- Scottish Chamber Orchestra
- BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra
- Scottish Ensemble
- Usher Hall
- Royal Northern Sinfonia
- Hebrides Ensemble

I have more than 20 years' experience in music and arts journalism, including ten years at *BBC Music Magazine*, two years as Editor at London's South Bank Centre, and four years at *The Strad* magazine.



**THE PERSPECTIVES**

**THE FISHERMEN**  
by CHICOZIE OBIOMA

adapted by  
Gloria Obianwan

★★★★  
The Guardian

1.20pm DAILY  
2-7 AUG (incl 4, 6, 20)

assembly  
open air theatre

**THE PERSPECTIVES**

**A FORTUNATE MAN**  
A play about a COURT REPORTER  
by John Bergen and Joan March  
with music by Michael Fitzmaurice

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the audience"  
Pulse

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by Irvine Welsh  
adapted by Harry Dobson  
written by Adam Blydenbury-Maher  
with Greg Egan

transpottinglive.com



**THOR AND LOKI**  
A sneak peek for Marvel and musical fans alike  
★★★★

In a near-apocalyptic world, not unlike our own, the tale of the gods and everyone else rests in the hands of the mighty Thor... but let's not fool seen on us! He's mighty hammer. The adaptation and Loki as the under-confident and somewhat ugly jockey, who just wants to punch with friends and make observations. Together they must overcome their differences, family ties, and insecurities in order to save the world.

The production comes at the quick end of a Marvel movie, with a few parallels drawn between the gods and 2019 USA. Odin appears cloaked in gold vesting gear, while Thor's nookie brothers are given American football attire, together they sing a very enthusiastic song about the merits of building a wall. There's plenty of snappy throwaway lines, political gags, and a healthy dose of folks to keep everyone laughing. And if that's not enough, the cast's talents will continually amaze their wit, dance, tap, play multiple characters, and numerous musical instruments. This is good show by Vicky Graham Productions is full of talent used well. (Claire McVey)

Assembly Place, until 25 Aug (incl 7, 13, 7, 15pm)  
12.30-1.15 (12-17)

**THE GREATEST PLAY IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD**  
Moogoo daydream in life-affirming play ★★★★★

Some plays should be proscribed on the NHS. The Greatest Play... is one such play, a feigned story with live music over in its pockets of creative. With the warmth and ease of a stand-up comedian, Julie Hesmondhalgh narrates a state-age love story written by her husband Ian Kinnear, which weaves poetry into the most mundane situations. There seems to have stood still for Tom, an aspiring writer and poet soul. But as he stands at his window, there is another figure on the street across the way, missing Tom. Has he found a new plot point, or a true soulmate? What unfolds is often profound, funny and heartfelt. It saves itself, and storytelling to what is ostensibly a light rom-com. Tom Kinnear's script does it with humour and heart reveals the work of a talented playwright. From the first moments, when Hesmondhalgh asks audience members to divert themselves of their shoes, she fearlessly brings to the fore reminders and elegant evocations of the vastness of space, and pockets of human interconnectedness. A small, perfectly formed production. (Sonia Irvine)

Traverse, until 26 Aug (incl 14.20 free rev) 12.30-1.15 (15-24)

**LOVECRAFT (NOT THE SEX SHOP IN CARDIFF)**  
A show with a heart and intelligence ★★★★★

Lovecraft aims to bring people together by explaining the science of love. The one-woman performance by Claire Eden promises to explain how understanding the brain can help us tackle loneliness, and fight the growing isolation epidemic. It's a noble idea, and one which is obviously backed up by a lot of research (there is a reading list handed out). Like a Brian Cox of love, Eden's explanation of how the brain works and the chemicals it releases in different love-related situations is insightful and comforting. Moreover the femininity and honesty of her stories creates a sense of intimacy and empathy. As Eden confides her personal history, her relationships, the audience root, gasp, and laugh with recognition and sympathy (there's a lot of shared pain over Tinder in particular). But the many post-breakup songs which punctuate the live storytelling are given too much of a centre stage here, and in the end leave little time to tie the action together, nor answer the key questions posed at the start. Nonetheless, it seems Eden genuinely cares, and the audience leave feeling closer to one another than when they first sat down. (Claire McVey)

Summerhall, until 25 Aug (incl 13, 20) 5pm  
15 (15-21)

**OTOSOTR:**

MONODRAMA BY ANATOLY OGAY  
DIRECTED BY TATYANA KM

FROM THE STEPPES OF KAZAKHSTAN  
A WAR STORY THROUGH  
THE EYES OF MILLENNIALS

2018  
United Sole  
Official Selection  
NYC, USA

"...TRUE THEATRE"  
Vlast KZ

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UNDERBELLY  
COWGATE  
WHITE BELLY  
@6.40PM

0131 510 0395 (6.40PM (7.40PM)  
underbellyedinburgh.co.uk 02.26 AUGUST 2018



**CENTURY SONG**  
Unconventional exploration of womanhood and race ★★★★★

Classically trained soprano Neema Bickersteth is a wholly compelling performer, despite not uttering a single word during Canadian company Volcano's multimedia performance work, Century Song. Alongside pianist Gregory Oh, and percussionist and computer effects technician Benjamin Grossman, she presents a one-woman show that fuses art forms to interrogate 100 years of the black North American female experience. Century Song is multidimensional in its creation, with Bickersteth's wordless singing of classical songs and improvised instrumental music providing an affecting soundtrack to shimmering projections and theatrical choreography. The music and visual art used is bold, supplying an ideal backdrop to the lush vocal arrangements. Beginning with Bachmann's vocalise, Century Song goes on a stirring journey that includes music by Messiaen, Cage and composer Reza Jacobs. As well as classical music, there's also a comical medley of classic TV theme songs, as played by Oh and Grossman. In each scene (and each piece of music, the experimental nature of Bickersteth's melisma and the matching musique concrete creates the kind of theatre that doubles as art through the interconnectedness of its many different and arresting elements. With collaborators Ross Manson (direction) and Kate Alton (choreography), Bickersteth provides an insight into the unspoken history of black women. The lack of a set storyline accentuates the theatricality of each period depicted, while placing a focus on an unconventional exploration of changing realities. (Arua Qureshi)

200 Southside, until 18 Aug (incl 19) 3pm, 7.12-11.14 (10-14)

18-19 AUG 2018 THE LIST FESTIVAL '97

**OTOSOTR:**

MONODRAMA BY ANATOLY OGAY  
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FROM THE STEPPES OF KAZAKHSTAN  
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**White Feminist, Tollbooth Market, 4-25 Aug (incl 13), 9.45pm, free.**

**Coccolinda, theSpace @ North Bridge, 3-11 Aug (incl 5 & 6), 11.35am, £5 (£3).**

**This is Just Who I Am, Assembly Rooms, 4-25 Aug (incl 20), 8.55pm, £9.50-£10.50 (incl 20-25). Previews 2 & 3 Aug, £7.**

**Queens of Sheba, Underbelly Cowgate, 4-26 Aug, 6.50pm, £11 (£10), Previews 2 & 3 Aug, £7.**

**MP: Fratty, The show sounds brilliant! Prejudice against black women is a big, urgent subject - why did you decide to approach it through the story of four women?**  
**JM:** Thank you! Addressing the subject through the story of these four women was actually Ryan Chan Cameron's idea. Ryan adapted a series of spoken word pieces I'd written for Queens of Sheba and created a storyline from them. I just wanted the story to be told by black women full stop. The most important thing was that the subject was addressed by the women who are directly affected.

**MP: What does the wider feminist landscape look like to you at the moment, and how does your show fit into it?**  
**JM:** Good question. The feminism I was initially introduced to was, and still is, extremely white & Eurocentric. It's something I've struggled to fit into personally despite agreeing with a lot of the goals that feminism

hopes to achieve (and is achieving). Going to Ghana, being around the matriarchs in my family and engaging with other black women who struggled to identify with the present day feminist movement revealed to me that the wider feminist landscape is completely different to the loud, white, privileged female voice that speaks over the rest of us. Queens of Sheba reflects those voices: it's black women telling everyone else to be quiet and listen to us. We're talking as low to feel, what we should believe as or how we should 'empower' ourselves. We demand that all men and non-black and white women listen and learn as we address their prejudices and how they contribute towards the general mistreatment of black women. In short, it doesn't fit in because it doesn't need to.

**MP: And 'wello culture' is permeating society and there, particularly among young people, and feeling inadequate. We're so used to saying the wrong thing, and not to be seen as the 'right' kind of person, we've become caricatures of ourselves, wanted to make a show that found the way in that - in a person trying hard to be the right way but perhaps getting it a bit wrong every time, and all the contradictions and hypocrisies that flows up.**

Mirinda Ping takes the bait and chain to Jessica Hagan from Queens of Sheba, an expose of misogyny, the prejudice against black women.

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**LOVE SONG TO LAVENDER MENACE**

LGBTQ+ history without sentimentality or too much tragedy ●●●●●

Providing a whistlestop tour of the history of Edinburgh's LGBT community, *Love Song to Lavender Menace* (directed by Ros Phillips) is a romantic comedy that eschews any kind of schmaltz. James Ley's script, and Matthew McVarish and Pierce Reid's performances, understand that moments of passion shine brighter when contrasted with a hint of darkness.

Set in an LGBT bookshop in the 80s (the *Lavender Menace* of the title), the play repudiates the tendency of some popular queer art to focus on trauma and misery and tells a story brimming with joy. It doesn't, however, present a sanitised view of the gay community's experience in early 80s Edinburgh. The show is punctuated by monologues from an unnamed gay man, married to a woman, terrified to come out. But, *Lavender Menace* refuses to let the era be defined entirely by suffering.

The most tear-inducing scenes involve the protagonists reminiscing on how being part of a supportive LGBT community was liberating and life-affirming. Though there is a film of nostalgia (Jimmy Somerville's falsetto provides the play's refrain), it never obscures what's underneath and instead simply serves to emphasise the sense of a captured moment in time.

*Lavender Menace* expertly provides its audience with a small dose of the ecstasy that the bookshops patrons must have felt on discovering knowledge previously denied to them. It is an ode to the power of solidarity and a tribute not just to the bookshop that inspired it but LGBT spaces the world over. (Liam Hailey)

■ Summerhall, until 26 Aug (not 20), 12.55pm, £12 (£10).



PHOTO: ZENYANA WIM

**OTOSOTR**

Gripping and revelatory show ●●●●●

With an indecipherable acronym for a title and an esoteric slice of history framing its narrative, this hardly counts as one of the Fringe's most immediately approachable shows. But be not afraid: *OTOSOTR* is well worth approaching.

Anatoly Ogay's solo drama with music about Soviet Koreans deported to Kazakhstan who later join the communist struggle against Hitler's armies is a passionate, compelling, stylish show. Propelled along by Ogay's magnetic performance, it's a work that ultimately moves beyond its historical specifics to become a moving, captivating interrogation of family love, cultural identity and technology.

Ogay recounts the tale of his beloved half-deaf grandfather, shipped with thousands of others from a section of Korea that found itself within Soviet borders to landlocked, arid central Asia. He volunteers for brutal Soviet army training on the promise of a better life in Europe, only to find himself the victim of harrowing ordeals and brutal Nazi attacks.

Performing behind and with an electronic keyboard, Ogay, *OTOSOTR* is a gripping, revelatory show. Listen hard and you'll even get to hear what its title stands for. (David Kettle)

■ Underbelly Cowgate, until 26 Aug, 6.40pm, £10-£11 (£9-£10).



PHOTO: MARTIN WATSON

**URBAN DEATH**

Classic horror gets contemporary update ●●●●●

Zombie Joe's Underground Theatre Group's nasty shocker is a cult institution in its native Los Angeles – and with the show's superb mix of slick technical polish and grimy, macabre subject matter, you can see why.

Yes, there are plenty of scares to keep the adrenaline pumping. But *Urban Death* is so much more than that. It unfolds as a series of wordless, sometimes virtually actionless tableaux, offering peeks into bizarre, sinister worlds – from the downright bloody to the quietly menacing. There's over-the-top grand guignol, but there are contemporary, urban horrors too; the dead-eyed stares of damaged prostitutes, or a grinning father getting too familiar with his daughter.

Technically, the show is flawless: performers creep imperceptibly into their disjointed positions in the pitch black to shock when the lights go up, and the sometimes glimmering lighting ensures our imagination fills in the full horror of what is half glimpsed.

But despite its well-drilled professionalism, there's a raw, dirty edge to *Urban Death* and a gleeful desire to push the audience into uncomfortable territory that gets under the skin in a deeply unsettling way. This is a brave, sophisticated show – as darkly funny as it is creepily appalling. (David Kettle)

■ Sweet Grassmarket, until 26 Aug, 9.30pm, £8.50 (£6.50).



**IT'S NOT A SPRINT**

Marathon show misses opportunities ●●●●●

Grace Chapman presents a one-woman show about Maddy, a 30-year-old who decides to run a marathon, and the life decisions she must come to terms with over those 26.2 gruelling miles.

Chapman is alone onstage in running gear with a helium balloon tied to her waist, bobbing up and down as she mimics the effort of running a marathon. Maddy is accompanied on her journey by a disembodied voice with whom she verbally spars, the physicality of running and talking adding extra desperation to her reflections on her life. Chapman has an affable stage presence, and the down-to-earth nature of the story allows her to probe into darker territory when it comes to Maddy's mother's health and her genetic clock.

However, the unique framing of the marathon run is not used to full advantage: save for Chapman's constant movement it is barely explored. Little is done with sound design, and the focus on numbers – 30 years old and 26.2 miles – becomes confusing rather than powerful at certain points. The piece is saved through Chapman's charisma rather than the uniqueness of the narrative framework, something that seems a missed opportunity. (Sean Greenhorn)

■ Pleasance Dome, until 26 Aug (not 21), 1.30pm, £10-£11 (£8.50-£10).





PHOTO: TATYANA KIM

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Performing behind and with an electronic keyboard, Ogay, *OTOSOTR* is a gripping, revelatory show. Listen hard and you'll even get to hear what its title stands for. (David Kettle)

■ *Underbelly Cowgate*, until 26 Aug, 6.40pm, £10-£11 (£9-£10).

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# OTOSOTR●●●●●●

- [David Kettle](#)
- 8 August 2018



## A show that reveals resonance despite a foreboding appearance

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# OTOSOTR.....

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Anatoliy Ogay and Tatyana Kim

A story of one of the 200,000 Koreans who were deported from the Russian-Korean border by the Soviet government in 1937. It is an exploration of the life of a Soviet soldier of Korean descent Anatoliy Ogay. This is a journey of a WWII hero who fought Nazis in Berlin in 1945, survived the communist regime in 1991 and preserved his Korean identity throughout his life. This powerful, extraordinary story that is told by his grandson traces his grandfather's life journey through a witty text, multimedia storytelling and contemporary music.

Text supplied by third party.

## Performance times

We have no details of upcoming performances, if you do please [let us know](#).

## Reviews & features

### OTOSOTR



8 Aug 2018 ●●●●●●●●

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**LIST** [The List: OTOSOTR](#) ●●●●●●

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