

Daisy Lee

IATL Report: Student as Producer Performance Bursary 'The Improv Musical'

The Project

The Improv. Musical is a troupe of 20 students who performed at The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. By asking members of the audience for the setting, characters, and styles of song, we improvised an hour long musical every night. Scenarios have ranged from a children's toy box, the bible, a nightmare and a wig factory on the moon. For the past three years we have travelled to the Festival to perform, and have been very successful, and this was our fourth year, which was our most successful yet, gaining multiple 4 star reviews and selling incredibly well.

Improv is a tight knit and hardworking cast and crew. Due to the highly personal element involved in improvising on stage to a paying audience, we aim to foster an environment of support, community, and friendship. We are also in a place to consistently push each other when performing. Every night offers new challenges and new opportunities. Acceptance and honesty are essential to be able to improvise, and we aim to instil these values as a cast outside of simply being on stage.

Our project of going to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival is one of great excitement and personal development for everyone involved. As most in our crew are aspiring performers, the opportunities presented at the world's largest arts festival are great. It creates a platform for many members to begin to network. To learn marketing a show first hand. To learn about the financial side of performance. To develop the endurance and metal needed for an extended run, something not available at university level. To perform to an audience, truly removed from our peer group.



What is fascinating and exciting about our continued success in Edinburgh is the reputation we have begun to create. Most days whilst flyer-ing, we will have individuals contact us to let us know that they saw us last year, and intend to come again. We, alongside other Warwick performers, have increased the profile of Warwick

University hugely, with articles being written in national newspapers dedicated to the plethora of outstanding performances coming out of the university.

We hope to continue sending The Improv Musical up to Edinburgh in future years, thus allowing a large number of students to perform at the fringe, which is a valuable experience for those who want to pursue a career in the arts.

Rehearsal Process

We rehearsed once a week from May until the end of term 3. We then had two weeks of intensive rehearsals in July where we had workshops led by industry professional on Improvisation and bonded



hugely as a troupe. July rehearsals were incredibly beneficial for those who were new to the troupe, to learn new skills but also to be welcomed into the family.

As the show is completely improvised every night rehearsal structure was more focused on teaching skills and practice than running a show over and over again. We also were introducing a full band this year, as previously we have only ever performed with a keyboard, this year we had a drum and bass as well.

A Day in the Life of The Improv Musical at the fringe

10am-11am Warm Up, Rehearsals and Notes

Every morning we would all gather in our accommodation's living room and do an hour of warm ups and rehearsals for those in the show that evening. This gave the cast an opportunity to get in the mind set for the day ahead of them and freshen up on skills. We also would conduct a note session with everyone from the previous nights show.

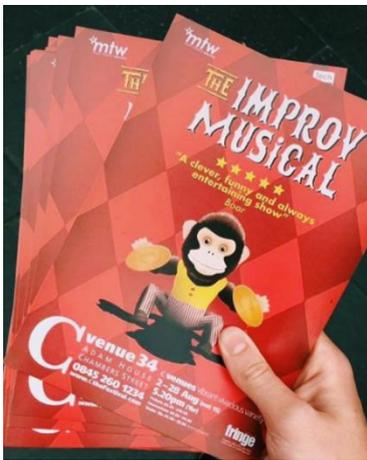
11am-3.40pm

Flying is a huge part of life at the Fringe. We would be on The Royal Mile for at least 4/5 hours a day. Engaging with potential audiences members and also being loud and cheerful on the mile meant that we were a constant recognisable presence. As well as handing out flyers we would poster the surrounding area. To stand out we created two sandwich boards and some hats, and as well as wearing all our show merchandise, this meant we were a sea of red on the mile that stood out hugely. Sometimes we would do a couple songs

and have a joke with the public. We gave out nearly 40,000 flyers in our 4 weeks at the Fringe, as well as over 1000 posters and stickers.

3.40pm-4pm

Most days we would have a mile performance. A mile performance occurs on one of the three mini stages which are set up on the Mile. We would have 20 mins to draw a crowd in a do a short show. As 20 minutes wasn't very long we would ask the audience for suggestions of settings, relationship and song styles and improvise a few songs. We once drew such a big audience that we were filmed by STV and our director was interviewed for TV.





4pm-5pm

We would then walk to C Venues on Chambers Street where our show was being performed. The cast would go to their dressing rooms to get changed and warm up before the show.

5pm-5.20pm

We would had a quick get in, setting up our stage in the venue before letting our audience in. We had a capacity of around 215 seats and averaged at selling around 180. We were pleased to see the amount of families we drew in and

many people came more than once. One girl even came to see us four times throughout the month!

5.20pm-6.20pm

Then we performed the show! We had an hour to take suggestions from the audience regarding characters, setting and musical styles.

The Performances and Reflection

We were very pleased with our reception at the Fringe this year. As well as selling incredibly well and drawing in big crowds consistently throughout the month, we also gained many positive reviews from sites such as Broadway Baby, A Younger Theatre and The 730 Review. The shows were hilarious and the audience responded largely positively. We absolutely loved our time at the Fringe and hope that will be able to go next year for our 5th year!



 **Laura Kate Long** Thoroughly enjoyed 'Don't rain on my Tardis' this afternoon. Very funny and very talented.
Like · Reply · Message · 1 · 2 August at 20:55

 **Carol Thayer** Titanic under the sea in the style of Jazz Gangster Rap with Popeye and the crab - as hysterical as it sounds
Like · Reply · Message · 1 · 14 August at 07:43

Review: The Improv Musical, C Venues

By [Beatrix Swanson Scott](#) on August 19, 2017 in [Theatre](#)



The Improv Musical just does what it says on the cover – the audience give suggestions, and a troupe of University of Warwick students improvise a wholly original musical on the spot. They have a keyboard player and a drummer standing by to accompany in an equally improvised manner. In an impressive feat of confidence and quick thinking, these young performers manage to pull off something funny and relatively coherent.



Mark Flexman
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Saw your show on Friday 4th. Was sooooo funny! A musical about a wax museum, shrek and lady gaga. Who'd have thought! Haven't laughed so much in ages. Thankyou so much



The Improv Musical

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PAGE VIEWS



by [Elliot Douglas](#) on 8th August 2017

Within the last few years, the improvised musical has become a standard of the Fringe, with at least four in Edinburgh this summer. Despite their generic name, *The Improv Musical* is a relatively new kid on the block, but these students from Warwick University manage to provide an hour of laughs to rival some of the professional companies.

