

Right Lines Productions

Adelaide Fringe - February/March 2019



Introduction

My trip to the Adelaide Fringe 2019 began in October 2018 when a friend sent me the following link: www.adelaidefringe.com.au/apply-as-an-industry-delegate

Intrigued, I looked into it, saw the potential, confirmed with family and work that the dates were achievable and so I sent off an application. *“So long as you’re looking to interact with our Fringe Artists and events in some capacity we would be pleased to confirm you as a Honey Pot Delegate”* the application said. It all seemed too simple – how hard would it be to interact with artists and go along to some events?!!! I was expecting a catch, but within a few weeks, I had been accepted. The planning began in earnest and the small matter of financing the trip came into sharp focus!

Funding Support

Of course, there was a catch of sorts, as despite being accepted as a “Honey Pot Delegate”, understandably, there was no support provided by Adelaide Fringe to help with travel costs or expenses. In addition, I had been offered the basic “Standard Industry Delegate Access”, so I was not entitled to complimentary tickets. Consequently, I had to get to work with some funding applications, a process with which I was familiar, fortunately, given Right Lines’ position as a project-funded theatre company!

I was delighted to receive funding support from **Federation of Scottish Theatre’s Go, See, Network, Share Fund** and also bursaries from **The Touring Network** and **North East Arts Touring** to assist with expenses associated with attending Adelaide Fringe. Collectively, this support covered my travel costs to Australia and some day to day expenses during my two week stay. In return, the agreement was that I would commit to regular social media updates, attend productions which may be suitable for touring in Scotland and connect with artists to make them aware of the touring opportunities in the Highlands & Islands and North-East in particular, but also across Scotland. A final report on my activities (this document) would also be submitted to funders.

It is important to stress that I have family connections in Adelaide, so accommodation was one cost I did not have to cover. Huge thanks go to my hosts Donald and Kathryn for looking after me, showing me around their wonderful city and pointing me in the right direction! I was staying in the heart

of the city within 10 minutes' walk from the Fringe Club and the main Fringe venues, so I could not have been located more centrally.

Honey Pot Programme

To quote from the Adelaide Fringe website:

"Honey Pot is Adelaide Fringe's internationally recognised arts marketplace, providing a dynamic matchmaking service for Artists and Industry Delegates. Lead by Fringe artists at all stages of development, Honey Pot is firmly immersed in the vibrant summer Festival season in Adelaide, South Australia.

Our marketplace provides an outstanding contribution as a performing arts connector between the artists and their projects and the diverse range of attending international delegates who travel to Adelaide.

Honey Pot Artists are able to showcase their work in its entirety and connect with over 200 industry delegates.

Participating in the Honey Pot program provides the opportunity to start new conversations, develop and continue professional relationships, and form lasting connections.

Outcomes often exceed expectations when new works, artists and ideas are explored in a spirit of openness and discovery. Connections established via the Honey Pot experience provides pathways for future programming and producing throughout Australia and around the world.

Honey Pot embraces and engages the creative and diverse talent that descends upon South Australia's world renowned summer festival scene and weaves it into the ecology of our industry programmers. Our marketplace is informal, yet structured and accessible. It continues to generate hundreds of opportunities."

As a direct result of the support received from funders, my Honey Pot Delegate status was elevated to "**Additional Industry Access**" which came with all the following benefits:

- Your delegate profile in our printed 'Who's Coming' industry booklet, and on our 'Who's Coming' industry page on the Fringe website – highlighting your programming requirements and interests to artists
- A bespoke tailor-made itinerary of recommended shows based on individual programming interests and schedules
- Access to all industry sessions, panels and Honey Pot hosted networking events

- An invite to our flagship networking and pitching event – the HIVE. Host your own table and have fruitful conversations with registered Honey Pot Artists
- An invite to all Honey Pot Industry networking brunches
- Access to registered Honey Pot artists event details and contacts – making contacting shows and artists easy and simple
- Unrestricted entry to the exclusive Fringe Club
- Complimentary Ticket Access – Honey Pot to provide access to our Honey Pot delegate ticket microsite, making it simple to book a ticket to a Honey Pot registered show
- Hotel Support – Up to three nights’ accommodation at The Watson, the Adelaide Fringe Hotel Partner.

The most important aspect of these benefits was the access to complimentary tickets. This allowed free reign in terms of seeing as many shows as possible during my stay in Adelaide. Led by Andy Beecroft, The Honey Pot Team – Paul, Olga and Marcus - could not have been more helpful and accommodating with regard to sorting out tickets and providing information and guidance to all delegates. They issued regular emails advising on “must see” shows, industry events, panel discussions, “What’s Hot in the Pot” gatherings of artists and delegates and special invitations from artists to “delegate only” events. For such a small team, they were extremely competent, welcoming and efficient and deserve massive praise for their work.



Olga



Andy Paul



Marcus

Adelaide Fringe Festival

Adelaide Fringe Festival is a massive event, second only in size to the Edinburgh Fringe which of course is the largest arts festival in the world. It has been running for a long time – since 1960 in fact and they will celebrate their 60th birthday in 2020. There are many similarities with Edinburgh in that it is not a curated festival and artists are free to come if they can find a venue and can absorb the costs of presenting their shows. Box office is the only source of income.

The Fringe runs for 4 weeks and some artists perform for the full run, but many stay only for a week or two weeks. Consequently, there were some shows in the programme that I was really keen to see that were not running during my two week stay.

Edinburgh Fringe (which is the only other fringe festival I can compare with) has several hubs – Gilded Balloon, The Pleasance, Assembly at George Square Gardens, Underbelly to name a few, as well as hundreds of other venues scattered across the city. Adelaide is similar in that it has a main central hub – two pop up, multi-venue sites called Gluttony and The Garden of Unearthly Delights which are situated side by side very near to the main city centre area and also just yards from the Fringe Club. There are also smaller venues that programme their Fringe season and invite specific acts to attend, but as far as I could gather, there are no guaranteed fees paid. The reputation of the venue (for example Holden Street theatres) can lead to consistently good audiences, thereby reducing the financial risk.

Adelaide prides itself on being the “20 minute city”: 20 minutes to the beach, 20 minutes to the Hills, 20 minutes to the airport, which means that although there are many venues spread right across Adelaide, most are within easy reach of the centre and generally within the “20 minute” rule. The city is laid out in a grid which also makes it relatively easy to navigate. Adelaide also boasts a very good public transport system, including a free tram service and a free bus service in the Central Business District (CBD).

Daily Diary

As per “contractual obligation” with my funders, I committed to social media posts on the Right Lines Facebook page (www.facebook.com/RightLinesPro) and tagged FST, NEAT and The Touring Network into every post. I also tagged Eden Court Theatre and Findhorn Bay Arts as I had an agreement with both organisations to promote their work while in Australia. As these Facebook entries were a fairly accurate log of my day to day activities, I have transferred them into this report with some amendments. This will provide an overview of

the shows I was able to see, the people I met and my impressions of Adelaide and the Fringe Festival.

Wednesday 20th February.

I travelled to Australia with Emirates, leaving Inverness on Monday 18th February and arriving in Adelaide via Manchester and Dubai in the late evening of Tuesday 19th February. I hit the ground running in Adelaide on Wednesday 20th February when my first engagement was to take part in an afternoon panel discussion at the Fringe Club about “Partnerships, Funding and Risk-taking in the world of Independent Producers.” I shared the stage with administrators and producers from Australia, the US and Richard Jordan from the UK who produces shows in London’s West End, Chicago and many other cities worldwide. Illustrious company! Jet-lag played a significant part in my performance and I have no idea if my contribution was coherent, or relevant, but I managed to tough it out for an hour. Only afterwards was I advised that the whole discussion had been recorded for a Podcast...

The first show I attended was **Exquisite: A Night with Mama Alto**, a gender-transcendent cabaret jazz singer person of colour. That was all the inclusion boxes ticked in one amazing show! In between fabulous interpretations of some jazz classics and an outstanding version of Songbird, we had a 5 minute exploration of the etymology of the word “Diva” and some engaging tales drawn from her travels around the world. Great show, highly recommended.

Post-show, Mama Alto introduced me to **Heather Croall**, the Fringe Director and Chief Executive, who invited me to come along to another show in the same venue (the Masonic Lodge). This was an Adelaide singer/songwriter called **Charles Jenkins** who had been very popular and successful in the 90s and was revisiting some of the old hits. The trip down memory lane was probably a treat for the local audience, but as I was unfamiliar with the music and, to be honest, the performance was uninspiring, it left me a bit cold and I slipped out before the end. I met my friends for dinner in Rundle Street, the main restaurant area in the city centre and then took in a late night session at the Fringe Club with **Dolly Diamond**, a very funny MC who has appeared many times in Edinburgh. This was followed by an amazing funk/rap set by the **Alex Rossi Band** from USA. Not a bad first day!

Thursday 21st February.

On Thursday morning, I took part in **What’s Hot in the Pot**, a gathering of artists and promoters and Honey Pot delegates at the Fringe Club. I met a

couple of Adelaide producers, Ruth and Isobel, who were involved in children's theatre and community projects locally. Then I connected with Jared Harford who is the Producer for the Fawlty Towers dining experience. They have three Fawlty Towers teams working worldwide with this show. He also runs a venue in Edinburgh - the George Hotel - during Fringe. He advised that there are still spaces to fill for August 2019, so if anyone is still searching for a venue for this year's Fringe, let me know and I can put you in touch with Jared. I also met Ross Harvie from Basingstoke Festival. He curates a programme for a 17- day Festival which takes place from mid-June through to the first week in July.

I then met Fringe CEO Heather Croall for the second time. She's very approachable and keen to direct folk to the important shows to catch. She was very keen that I attend a show called **Wet Sounds**, performed in a swimming pool. Due to a busy schedule with a number of pre-booked shows, I couldn't fit this in, but I have the contacts. The company is based in London.

In the early evening, I went to see **Extinguished Things** at the wonderful **Holden Street Theatres**. The show was written and performed by **Molly Taylor** who was an Associate playwright with National Theatre of Scotland a few years ago. Really brilliant solo show which was an Adelaide Fringe Weekly Award winner in this first week. Good to know I'm choosing the right shows to see... Holden Street Theatres (a collection of four spaces across two converted churches and a sunken garden) is only a 20 minute tram ride from the Fringe Club (confirming the 20 minute rule!) It is situated in the middle of an industrial estate behind the Adelaide United football ground, so the approach does not hold much promise. However, when you turn the corner into Holden Street itself, an oasis of culture appears before your eyes. Interesting demographic - I was the youngest by about 10 years and I'm not far off the bus pass myself! Nonetheless, this appeared to be a very well-run, well-supported venue, with a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable audience. A venue to be recommended.

Back into town on the tram and then a long walk down to an obscure part of town for a show called **30,000 Notes**, a delightful piece which was part art installation, part solo theatre show, part confessional, part coming out story, family history, eulogy, love-letter to Italian grandparents... all set against the background of an obsessional compulsion to take notes about EVERYTHING, plus some incredible choral music written by the performer. This was the world premiere of the show, commissioned by Adelaide Fringe Artists' programme.

Slightly cringe-worthy and self-indulgent at times, given that it was the performer's personal story and he also repeatedly referenced his boyfriend who not only encouraged him to create the piece, but was the technician running the show at the back of the room. As it took a full week to install and another week to tech, I doubt if this would make an easy touring production!

Friday 22nd February.

I was invited to attend an exclusive performance of a show called **Comfort Food Cabaret** in a house in Norwood, just a few minutes from the city centre. 8 delegates attended, including Heather Croall the Fringe CEO again (I was beginning to think she was stalking me) and we were wined and dined by **Michelle Pearson**, a cabaret singer and cook who has developed a winning combination. She prepared the food in front of us, told some gentle stories and then sang some classics, including a slightly rewritten version of Back to Black which was very funny. Some of the fellow diners were very impressed, especially Jared Harford and Darren Lee Cole from Soho Playhouse, NYC, so don't be surprised to see this show appearing in New York and Edinburgh Fringe. This show could definitely tour to the Highlands & Islands and North East Scotland. Highly recommended!

Immediately after this we were whisked into the Fringe Club and I hosted a table at the HIVE, an event designed to allow artists to meet producers and promoters, pitch their shows and also hear about venues and touring opportunities internationally. I saw loads of artists and performers in the two hour session and as well as hearing about their various shows, this was a great opportunity to plug **Tourbook, The Touring Network, Eden Court, NEAT and Randolph's Leap** (the indie-pop band Right Lines had collaborated with on our most recent touring show – **The Isle of Love.**)

A quick stroll across to the Saracen's Head Hotel where I met Pete Titchener and his wife Nicky for dinner. Pete was a member of the South Australian folk band **Colcannon**. I arranged a UK tour for them in 2000 (after a chance meeting with Nicky on Hopeman beach!) and had not caught up with them for many years. Sadly, one of the original band members, John Munro, died in 2018, so this catch up was a bittersweet occasion. In addition to his work with Colcannon, for many years John also toured the world with his great friend and musical partner **Eric Bogle**. Pete has now taken John's place in Eric's band and he was about to leave for Western Australia for a series of gigs. Eric Bogle still performs at "local" festivals in Australia, but after a farewell tour in Scotland and UK a few years ago, Pete told me he has now retired from international touring.

Still only early evening and I went to the **Bakehouse Theatre** to see a great show about dementia called **The Forgettory** written by and featuring an Australian actor Tracy Crisp. Poignant, funny and heart-breaking, it's a story about ageing, family memories and the loss of memory. "If we don't remember who we were, then who do we become?" Recommended. This show would be suitable for our Touring Networks, although the usual issue of the viability of touring a show with a running time of under 60 minutes.

Then on to see a play by a young Australia actor called Ingrid Taylor-Moss in her show **Daze To Thirty**, a reflection on life and wine as she approaches her 30th birthday. This was a lovely performance in an intimate show that probably needs a bit more development and structure. It was a great venue - **The Tunnels at Treasury 1860** – quite literally, the tunnels under the former state treasury building. I met the actor's mother after the show and we reckoned her ex-husband knew a friend of mine who used to live in Queenscliff, Victoria... small world!

On to a late-night show - **George Glass Proves The Existence of God at Gluttony**, one of the main fringe sites - like George Square Gardens at Edinburgh Fringe. This was truly silly, properly ridiculous fringe nonsense which was very funny, featuring simple songs that stay with you for days! And (spoiler alert) God's existence is proved in the first 10 minutes. The rest is party time!

Sat 23rd February.

I am excited to record that today I went on my first Cellar Door experience to a winery in the Adelaide Hills (rude not to). This is free wine tasting and very sociable – and the good news... there are literally hundreds of Cellar Door opportunities!

On to a show called **Highly Flammable Love** in a very remote venue (a High school in Belair) for which I had high hopes, but sadly it didn't live up to expectations. Basically a student performance, it was billed as a modern Australian musical, but there was very little music unless I missed something, only two numbers in the first half. As the venue was way out of town (a 40 minute train ride into the city), and the show didn't feel like it was going to improve radically, I had to excuse myself at the interval and run to catch my train back for the next show.

Back in the city, I went to the **Loft at A Club Adelaide** to see **The Other Side of 25**, a really strong piece about a young woman who agrees to act as a surrogate for her sister and then something unpleasant happens to the sister... The show was presented by a young American actor **Becca Hurd** and explores "a woman's discovery of what you gain through what you lose." She gave a well-balanced, convincing performance with lots of humour, tears and live music. I felt this was perhaps not too suitable for rural touring, mainly due to

the strong content, but definitely a fringe show, or suitable for programming in mid-scale theatres.

Sunday 24th February.

I went to see a physical comedy show called **Table for Two?** at **Tandanya Arts Centre**. Presented by a young Australian actor, **Will Tredinnick** with his first show. I really, really enjoyed this! It could work equally as well as a children's show (there were some pre-teens in the audience who were in stitches) or an adult show. There is extremely well-handled audience participation and a hilarious "Mad Chef" scene which had everyone falling about. Will also won an Emerging Artist award at Sydney Fringe 2019 and the same accolade at Adelaide this week, so an artist to watch out for. He is probably aiming to tour in UK/Scotland after the Edinburgh Fringe in 2020. This show is highly recommended and would be suitable for rural touring throughout all the Scottish Touring Networks and also mid-scale receiving theatres. Later, I went to see a show at **The Mill** called **Benchmarks**. A two-hander about conflict between an old down and out and a young man leaving home and trying to find his way. It was an interesting script, although a bit over-written. I'd say probably more successful with stronger actors and a bit of editing!

Then back on the tram up to Holden Street Theatres for my second visit. This is a very impressive venue, like an oasis of culture in an industrial estate (I may have said that before). The show was **The Merger** starring **Damian Callinan**. I was so glad I caught this as it was the last night of the run. The one man show has recently been made into a feature film and Damian was leaving the next morning to fly to Dublin and then on to Glasgow for the film festivals there which will feature the film. Really funny and he was extremely adept at engaging the audience and interacting with a handful of "victims". It was delivered in very thick Aussie accents (he played several characters), but I got enough to make it an enjoyable experience. The play was ostensibly about the impending merger of a down on its luck Aussie Rules football team, but it was really about integration of refugees into Australian society, tolerance and social inclusion. Highly recommended. Go and see the film in Glasgow if you can!

Monday 25th February.

This was a fantastic day out for all Honey Pot delegates, courtesy of Adelaide Fringe and Brand South Australia. We were treated to a "day of relaxation and indulgence" as we toured the Adelaide Hills, taking in Mouny Lofty House, Kris Lloyd's amazing cheese factory at Woodside, Bird In Hand winery for lunch and then Lot 100 which was a winery, brewery and distillery all in the one site. Everything covered! We also had some short surprise performances from

South Australian acts along the way, including the **Gospo Collective** with excerpts from their award-winning show **Jackson vs Jackson**, award-winning magician **Matt Tarrant** and some native animals and snakes into the bargain from the Warrawong Wildlife Sanctuary. If they wanted to impress the delegates with home-grown entertainment, hospitality, gourmet experiences and scenic offerings, they certainly achieved their aim. Job done!

On the bus, I met up with **Hongjia Qi**, a delegate from Finland representing his company **From Start to Finnish**. He regularly programmes at Edinburgh Fringe (Summerhall in 2018) and has worked with Right Lines collaborator and friend James Bryce! I also got into a huddle with **Lynne Halfpenny**, **Director of Culture with Edinburgh City Council** and **David Dey**, **Producer with Gilded Balloon**. Nothing like the Scots Abroad sticking together!

Mon 25th February, part 2.

After our amazing day out, it was back to the shows. I saw **Tim Marriott** in **All Change**, another show about dementia. Really enjoyable, sweet two-hander piece which I think would work in tandem with one of Right Lines' solo shows as a double bill. Tim has two other shows - **Mengele** which sold out at Edinburgh Fringe last year, and **Judas**. He told me both are strong, serious pieces and he plans to present both at the Edinburgh Fringe this August. Recommended.

There was just enough time and energy left to join my Adelaide hosts Donald and Kathryn at **Billy Bob's Blues** night at the **Grace Emily Hotel**. What a night of amazing blues! Billy Bob himself is a mean guitarist with a solid house band, but the star of the evening was a young guy called **Dusty** who has a band called **The Wanderers**. Look them up on YouTube. This boy can play! And his 22 yr old bass and lead guitar player Stephan wasn't far behind in terms of ability and musicianship. How can a 22 yr old play the Blues???? Believe me, he just can!

I doubt if Billy Bob and his Blues pals will ever tour to Scotland, but if you are lucky enough to visit Adelaide and want some raw, rockin', honest, down to earth Blues, don't miss out on a Monday night session at Grace Emily's! It's probably fair to say that this was not strictly-speaking a Fringe event, or even part of my remit here, but the gig is a fixture in Adelaide's rich music scene and a rare treat!

Tuesday 26th February.

Adelaide Fringe is completely different from Edinburgh as there is less reliance on a tourist audience and more emphasis on local people supporting the

shows. Consequently, there is very little programming during the daytime except at weekends. Given the extreme heat, that's probably a good strategy, but it means that all the shows are bunched up between 6 - 11pm, with late-night activities pretty much restricted to the main centres of Gluttony and The Garden of Unearthly Delights. These sites are like two George Square Gardens venues side by side, complete with pop up bars, food outlets, yurts and the Spiegeltent. And tame possums late at night.

In the afternoon, I went for a walk along the River Torrens to get some views of the city. Apparently, this is not something the locals do... at least not when the temp is 36 degrees. During my 8 km stroll, I met four cyclists in total and the only other person on foot was West End producer Richard Jordan! We had a brief exchange about the ridiculousness of the Brits (on this one occasion, I'll agree to be so classified) out walking in these brutal conditions - and then we went off in opposite directions in a desperate search for water!

Back to the theatre and I spent a lovely, air-conditioned evening at **The National Wine Centre** for three shows back to back. **Talofa Papa** was a production by a company from New Zealand based on Samoan culture. A very, very gentle piece about an old man gathering his family together (the audience) to celebrate his dead wife's birthday. It took a long time to get going and was basically a very simple show about remembering and showing respect to loved ones. Not much drama! The one plus point - everyone received a garland made out of sweets!

On to **Anna Nicholson - Woman of the Year**. This was great! Excellent character acting and quality singing too from this young English actor. Four women have been nominated for Woman of the Year - Denise, a jolly ladies' outfitter, Bianca, a self-obsessed Instagram vlogger, Ruth, a happy clappy vicar who has a grumbling rivalry with the vicar in her neighbouring parish and Shirley, an older woman with a life-long passion for sex. Very well-acted and great audience engagement. I had a long chat with Anna after the show and she has lots of other material which could be added into this piece. She is also writing a new show based on two of the same characters. This would be a very good fit for rural touring and she acknowledged that it could be extended easily to make a show with an interval, as opposed to the straight hour.

Highly recommended.

Then **Umbrella Man**. I come all the way to Adelaide to meet a performer from Rosemarkie in the Black Isle. I can look out over the Black Isle from the upstairs window in my house! **Colin Bramwell** is a performance poet and musician and he has created a wacky piece about a man who believes the Earth is Flat. It is a surreal, unnerving, but very engaging show by a very talented poet and musician - and all delivered, unashamedly, in a broad Rosemarkie accent! It was safe to say I was the only one in the audience who could fully understand

the dialect and get all the local references! We had a good chat afterwards and there may be scope for extending the act to include a performance of the show, plus support from some local poets or a singer/songwriter. Highly recommended.

Colin is also part of the Scottish improv troupe **Men with Coconuts**. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to see their show due to clashes with other bookings, but it received a 5-star review and near-capacity audiences every night. They have a great following at Edinburgh Fringe, so I plan to catch them back home this August.

Wednesday 27th February.

As nothing much happens during the day at the Fringe, I just had to take another trip out of the city with my friend Donald to another couple of wineries and a whisky distillery. This is so much part of the culture of South Australia, that it is essential to visit as many "Cellar Door" experiences as possible. Well, I've convinced myself of that fact, if nobody else...

We went to Penny's Hill and had an exceptional range of wines and a platter feast. Then on to Fleurieu Distillery in Goolwa. I had prior knowledge of this place as they produce a single malt called Whisky Kisses! As most Right Lines friends and supporters will know, our musical Whisky Kisses dates back to 2005 when we entered Eden Court's Highland Quest competition to write a new Scottish musical - and we nearly won. The show toured across Scotland in 2010 and then of course became the flagship production at [Pitlochry Festival Theatre](#) during the Summer Season in 2014. So, it felt important to make the connection!

We met Angela who is the distiller and sampled a drop of Whisky Kisses. It's only 3 years old, but was very pleasant and at 55%, quite powerful. I also sampled Atlantic Crossing and another expression called Bogart & Bacall which was a mighty 61.2%. We skipped over copyright issues, but I did make it clear we own the whiskykisses.com website... available at a good price!

Then on to a funky, arty winery called the Cube, which had toilets with the most unnerving urinals in the world. Bizarrely, I didn't like all the wines. So, we had to try another winery on the way home. Alphabox and Dice which was like a hipster winery with a cool dude called Tristan educating us on their wines. Excellent!

After all this "culture", I got back to the city in time for **Matriarch** at the **Tandanya Centre**. This could have been a great show, but enjoyment was marred by very poor sound quality for the first 15 minutes, by which time it was difficult to engage with the piece. A real shame because this was one of the relatively few shows about indigenous culture.

Thursday 28th February.

I went along to the **What's Hot in The Pot** meet the artists session in the morning. Not so many in attendance today, possibly because it was really, really hot. Had a good chat with Janet McLeod, a Melbourne-based independent producer, Charlotte Bennett from Soho Theatre, London and Gillian English, a cabaret performer who has also started a fringe festival in Tasmania. Later, I attended a panel discussion on **Touring in Australia** which was interesting, mainly due to exactly the same issues arising as in Scotland. For example, how to reach and sustain audiences, ticket pricing, making theatre and other art forms accessible to new audiences and how to appeal to younger audiences when the demographic in rural areas is usually 50+. The only difference was in travel times... in Scotland, artists drive for 2 hours between gigs, in Australia it is often 2 days and more!

Later a show at **Treasury 1860** with Matt Hyde. **Honest** is about a civil servant descending into crisis which results in a drunken rant, during which only the truth is spoken - at last. Set in a bar, this is a very portable show. No sound, lights, props, just an actor in a bar (and some non-alcoholic drinks!) Recommended.

And straight after in the same venue, **Just Desserts**. This is the late-night adult show by Michelle Pearson who also does **Comfort Food Cabaret**. There's an interactive element where a male audience member is blindfolded and fed various chocolate-drenched sweet items... and guess who the unfortunate victim was? Photos may be available at some point... The only consolation is that at least now I can say I have performed at The Adelaide Fringe! This is a great show, with a lot more music and song - a four-piece band to back up Michelle. This will very likely transfer to Edinburgh Fringe (I was sitting with Jared Harford, a producer who is very, very keen on securing the show) and may also be available for touring. Highly recommended.

I also met Gavin Robertson (who performs as Greg Byron) and Nicholas Collett, both performers who have toured to NEAT venues recently and will do so again later this year. Great to make acquaintances in Adelaide that I can follow up in deepest Aberdeenshire!

Friday 1st March.

I was invited to a **Civic Reception** for the Honey Pot delegates at the Adelaide Town Hall, with a welcome from Sandy Verschoor, the Lord Mayor! Also a speech from Heather Croall, Fringe Director. Then it was straight into another HIVE meeting in slightly cooler surroundings than the Fringe Club – the Council Chambers. I met some interesting artists, including a friend of our family friends from the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. **Sam Hafey** was performing

in a show which she wrote and produced called **Janis - the Life and Soul of a Rock Legend**. She's 22 years old and she's singing the blues! After a drinks reception, it was back to show time and I went to **Gluttony** to see a physical theatre show called **Pss Pss**. Very funny and skilful acrobatics. Recommended.

A quick return to the Garage International venue at the Town Hall for the **Janis** show which was great, despite difficult acoustics in the high-ceilinged room. A few days later, I learned the show had won a Fringe Weekly Award for music. Finally, some late night comedy at the **Rhino Rooms** venue, featured some well-known Australian comics (all on the telly) and that was another day at the Adelaide Fringe done!

Saturday 2nd March.

The hottest day so far - 41 degrees. The locals call this period in their calendar Mad March. The Fringe begins mid-February and runs for a month through to mid-March. This first weekend in March, there is a massive road race around the city streets called the Super Loop 500, part of series of car races across Australia. They used to have the Grand Prix here until it moved to Melbourne a few years ago. With Adelaide Festival starting this weekend (like the official Edinburgh Festival) and WomADelaide next week, the city is absolutely buzzing with people and activity. They say very little happens the rest of the year – not true as there appears to be a festival of some sort every month of the year – but this is definitely a good time to visit!

I took in another couple of shows back to back at Holden Street Theatres - **Build a Rocket** and **Games**. Both shows have been gathering 5-star reviews and winning awards here, so I'm glad I managed to get tickets. **Build a Rocket** was especially good and brilliantly performed. A young girl from Scarborough gets pregnant. She thinks he's the love of her life, he goes off with her mate. It could all spiral downwards in a familiar way, but things turn out pretty well in the end. Great writing, an uplifting message and a very high-quality performance from young English actor Serena Manteghi. Very highly recommended.

Games was a heavier piece about Jewish athletes in the time of 1936 Berlin Olympics - with some very relevant contemporary references. Again, beautifully written and great two-hander cast. Enjoyment was spoilt due to the excessive heat in the room - like watching serious theatre in a sauna! Highly recommended (the show, not the concept of watching theatre in a sauna...)

Then a music gig at one of the most famous venues in Adelaide - **The Gov**. This was where South Australian band Colcannon recorded their live album (I arranged a UK tour for them back in 2000s as previously noted.) Great one-off

show of British 60s music, performed by a top quality band from Adelaide, which had the (mostly 65+) audience rocking the dance floor! Great fun. Finally a spin round **Gluttony** and a second helping of **George Glass Proves the Existence of God** for some fringe madness to end the night. This is a great fringe festival!

Sunday 3rd March.

My Fringe experience almost over, I took a chance to take in another gig at The Gov with my host Donald. He and partner Kathryn were both judges for the music aspect of the Fringe, hence the numerous concerts we attended. This was a lunchtime gig that was billed as a **Beatles vs Stones** battle of the bands event, but in actual fact it was just two tribute bands performing an hour set each of greatest hits. It might have been fun to have an interactive/competitive element to it, with the audience voting on their favourite. As it turned out, the Stones were much more energetic and dynamic with some excellent Mick Jagger pouting and strutting from the lead singer. There was a 1000+ audience at this afternoon event, again mostly drawn from the older age bracket, but the dance floor was absolutely full! After The Gov, it was down to Semaphore on the coast where we took in a blues show held in the **South Australia Communist Party Club**. Nothing like a bit of variety on this trip! Very classy set from the **Blue Katz**, but we had to return to the city to catch my last show at the fringe. This was a comedy cabaret called **The Worst Little Warehouse in London** in the **Garden of Unearthly Delights** which had just won a Weekly Fringe Award for Best Cabaret. It was a funny two-hander about a young couple from Australia who end up in a backpacker's hostel in London and spend a year trying to move out. It was delivered at break-neck speed with clever lyrics, strong musical theatre style, with two performers and one keyboard, played separately and simultaneously. It was a good, slick show - almost too slick, with no "air" in the performance. Not often the main complaint about a Fringe show is that it was too well-rehearsed, but the Worst Little Warehouse would have benefitted from being less frantic and a little looser... So, after a wander round the Garden for the last time, I went to take in **Yabarra - the Gathering of Light** on the banks of the River Torrens. This was like a cross between **Arts in Motion's Ness Islands Halloween** extravaganza and the **Enchanted Forest** in Pitlochry. Presented every night of the Fringe, free of charge, it was an excellent stroll along the river with the sounds of the

bush and indigenous voices emanating from the trees. Huge colourful inflatable animals were dotted around on both sides of the river, with amazing projections of birds and First Nation people appearing out of the darkness. Superb!

Monday 4th March.

My last day in Adelaide, but I still managed to squeeze in a wee bit more culture. A major feature of Adelaide Festival (the big festival) is **Writers' Week** - a full programme of talks and presentations by a wide array of authors and artists. There are two open-air stages running simultaneously with capacity for 2000 audience members each. And all completely free! I planned to see a talk by an Australian artist called **Ben Quilty** who had been a war artist in Afghanistan and also covered the refugee crisis in Greece. By good fortune, a major exhibition of his work was on at the Adelaide Art Gallery close by, so I visited the exhibition first. His work covered some of the massacres of aboriginal peoples, as well as the war and refugee images, so it was all extremely visceral and heart-rending material. His talk was powerful and challenging and had the 2000+ audience totally captivated for a full hour. This was followed by a talk by **Marcus Zusak**, the author of the Book Thief, but here talking about his new book The Bridge of Clay. Again, an attentive audience of 2000 sitting in the late afternoon sun, sipping cold beer and taking in some culture. What could be better?!!!

Benefits of Attending Adelaide Fringe

I attended more than thirty different events, including theatre, physical comedy, cabaret, circus, magic, art exhibitions, book discussions and live music – a truly eclectic mix. Thanks to Brand South Australia, Adelaide Fringe and my hosts in the city, I was able to sample the culture, scenic beauty and food and drink on offer in Adelaide and the surrounding area, all of which provided a rounded experience of this amazing part of the world.

The "Honey Pot" programme allowed access to panel discussions and special happenings for delegates and also facilitated connections with a wide range of artists, producers and programmers from Australia and around the world throughout the course of my time at the Fringe. I was able to rub shoulders and share experiences with industry professionals with whom I may never have had the chance to meet otherwise. It remains to be seen if there will be any direct benefit to Right Lines Productions from these connections, but the import thing is that the connections have been made. I was not in a position to offer bookings to any artists, but in my role as a representative for **The Touring**

Network and **NEAT** and advocate for **Tourbook**, **Federation of Scottish Theatre**, **Eden Court** and **Findhorn Bay Arts Festival**, I took every opportunity to share awareness of these organisations and encourage people to connect with them. I will share this general report with all agencies, but will also report directly with each one to share specific thoughts and recommendations.

The complimentary tickets and “Delegate Pass” provided entry to a great selection of shows, which made attending the festival financially viable and also provided access to a wide range of productions. With only a few random exceptions, I chose to attend shows that may be most suitable for touring in Scotland – in other words, solo, or small cast, portable shows. I think I managed to identify a few!

Final Thoughts...

As previously mentioned, the members of the Honey Pot Team, led by Andy Beecroft, were absolutely tremendous at organising the various surgery events, panel presentations, sorting out tickets, answering questions and being on hand and available to support delegates at all times. Great work! Thanks again to Andy, Paul, Olga and Marcus.

Once again, I would like to thank [The Touring Network](#), [Federation of Scottish Theatre](#) and [North East Arts Touring \(NEAT\)](#) for making my trip possible through generous financial support.

Was it worthwhile? Undoubtedly! Would I go again? Definitely! Would I recommend to others? Without question! Adelaide is a long, long way from home, but once you are there, it has a very comfortable, familiar feel. The people are very friendly, welcoming and generous and they love to show off their city to visitors. I had an extremely positive and fulfilling time attending the Adelaide Fringe 2019 and I would be happy to share my experiences, impressions and connections with anyone who would like to get in touch with me directly.

Euan Martin Right Lines Productions

www.rightlines.net www.facebook.com/RightLinesPro/

For a short Power Point video with some images for the trip, please see - <https://vimeo.com/325003892>

For further information on Adelaide Fringe, please visit the website -

www.adelaidefringe.com.au