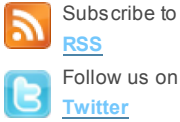




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Home Brighton 2010 All-Male Cabaret from Der Wunderlich Revue

All-Male Cabaret from Der Wunderlich Revue

Thursday, 06 May 2010



The Brunswick (venue website)
5, 10 May, 7:30pm-11:00pm
Reviewed by Mathilde Madden

In the space of little more than a year, *Der Wunderlich Revue* has become something of a Brighton institution. It's a joyous, fast-paced show which combines male cabaret acts with kitsch male strippers – "Boylesque" – producing something fun and uplifting, and a refreshing change from the usual cookie-cutter cabaret.

For fans of the show, the regular crew were all there. Count Adriano Fettuccini's act can be summed up in the two words "unicycle striptease" (try Googling it); Team MUD's crossdressing cheerleaders have so much energy it's surprising the roof stays on; and Size Zero Albino's Michael Jackson routine to *Beat It* is both hilarious and quite disturbing (that poor monkey!) On the eve of the General Election, we were also treated to pole dancing MPs, a stripping James Bond and a crooning Pope Benedict who had a few things to say about the current scandals rocking the Catholic Church. One thing you can never say about *Der Wunderlich* is that it shies away from controversy – they like to be shocking just as much as they like to be silly or sexy, often striving for all three at once.

A welcome new addition to the show was British Heart. Mr Heart is almost certainly the finest act on the male burlesque circuit; a consummate pole dancer, here he stayed unusually over-dressed, MCing the show with a sleazy sophistication. In fact, the long-drawn-out uncertainty of when – if at all – British Heart was going to remove any of his clothes became the highlight of the show, taking striptease to a whole new level.

Most of the new wave of burlesque shows can grate annoyingly with my feminist sensibilities – because the male acts are always the MCs and magicians, and the female acts are the ones taking their clothes off. *Der Wunderlich Revue*, with its simple policy that all the acts are male, changes all that. It raises interesting questions about the roles male and female performers usually adopt in this type of show... not that I spent too much time considering such weighty matters during this endlessly inventive and entertaining routine.

The show isn't perfect. The venue is stuffed uncomfortably full and the mood of the show is often of something on the brink of utter chaos, though that really only adds to its charm. And at the end, when the performers all crowd on stage to dance an enthusiastic "mancan", they look as happy as their thrilled audience and any mishaps are quickly forgotten. *Der Wunderlich Revue* is an unmissable Fringe show, a truly unique gem in a sea of samey cabaret.

<< Tuesday by Edward Bond

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[Back]

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Page 1 of 5:

[Next](#) [Last](#)

