

FRINGE 2016: James McLean – Big Enough and Ugly Enough – 4.5K

Cabaret, Comedy

by Anthony

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After a successful sold-out Fringe season in 2015, *James McLean* is back with a revised production of his hilariously uplifting show, *Big Enough and Ugly Enough*, through the assistance and tutorship of award-winning artist, *Wes Snelling*. Having seen James McLean's show premiering at last year's Fringe, I had the pleasure to once again see his newly reimagined show for the 2016 Adelaide Fringe season.

Since inheriting a box of random 'crap' from his recently passed grandma, McLean tells a story of his struggles to become a CIA (Capable Independent Adult) as he moves out of home. The unique storytelling experience is portrayed as a series of amusing flashbacks and memories assisted with the hilarious commentary from his grandma and interactions with his conscience. From stories of the misadventures in a swinging social club, scary trips through the Yarra Ranges, and experiences in judging someone from their appearance, McLean's self-deprecating humour reinforces his unique comedy style and is a prime focus throughout the show.

Through the distinct use of body posture and voice changes, McLean consistently proves his impressive acting ability, particularly when changing between a range of different characters. Furthermore, McLean supports his storytelling with original and hilariously written songs. Though the musical performance itself was very simple with only a keyboard, McLean's powerful crooning vocals mixed with hilarious lyrics reflect the musical talent and comedic personality that makes him such a solid performer.

Having seen and reviewed the 2015 show, small yet effective changes were made to the show which resulted in noticeable improvements. Each segment of the narrative was structured more tightly, which allowed for the jokes to be delivered cleanly with an effective punchline. Additionally, McLean's original songs were more polished and performed extremely well.

James McLean is a rising local talent with the type of comedic charm that will leave an impression as you leave the show. McLean is sure to return to the Adelaide Fringe in the future for more new and exciting productions. Now located in the main theatre at the *Bakehouse Theatre*, *James McLean* continues his show *Big Enough and Ugly Enough* until the 5th of March.

Kryztoff Rating: 4.5K