

festival 07 reviews

Peel session that delivers dry wit and a few kicks

Teenage Kicks

Assembly Universal Arts,
George Street ★★★

THEATRE WHEN John Peel died in October 2004, a nation of music-lovers mourned him just as much as they did John Lennon or Kurt Cobain. That is how highly thought of the Radio One DJ was, and still is.

Peel made bands famous, gave hope to anyone who had a demo cassette tape and enough money for a stamp, and would have grown men leave their pints half-empty in the bar so they could get home in time to hear his show.

In *Teenage Kicks*, the action takes place within a BBC radio studio and Peel's cramped and cluttered office, and documents his shift from boring hippy to one of the most well-loved figures in British music. We see how Peel and long-term producer John Walters

got on, Marc Bolan makes a couple of funny appearances, and Cowdenbeath Football Club get mentioned at least three times. Unsurprisingly, there's a good soundtrack, too.

But does John Peel's life really make for a good theatre production? Light-hearted in tone, there's nothing more heavy to focus on than Peel's problems with "them upstairs" in the BBC boardroom and narrowly escaping the sack.

Looking like Robinson Crusoe in a pair of tatty jeans, Kieron Forsyth plays the role of Peel with due aplomb, nailing his voice and dry wit.

Non-Peel fans may question the point of attending such a show, yet for those who grew up listening to the man's radio show, there is enough emotional depth, humour and rock stories to keep you rooted to your seat.

■ *Until August 27*

BARRY GORDON

Birth fable needs tension

A Number

Sweet, Grassmarket

★★

A MALE dominated play about artificial birth by a female writer is always going to raise interesting questions. Caryl Churchill's stark two-hander examines the spiky and disintegrating relationship between Salter and his sons, who all turn out to be clones.

In a series of short encounters it is revealed how Salter's original son, Bernard, or B1, became the subject of a cloning experiment.

The relationship between Richard Alleman, as Salter, and Simon Rhodes, as the clone, never quite hits boiling point, and the lack of any real tension between the pair uncovers none of the script's buried emotions.

Until August 19

LUCY RIBCHESTER

Makings of a modern classic

Edinburgh Evening News

La Femme est Morte 8/8/07

Pleasance King Dome,
Potterrow

★★★★

THIS show starts with two young men boxing, segues into an energetic and tightly performed eight-person dance routine and then morphs into a mini press conference before the audience has time to realise it is an adaptation of the classic tragedy *Phaedra*.

In this production *Phaedra* is a celebrity mother of the Victoria Beckham school.

Brash, sexy and irreverent, this show is hugely entertaining.

New York-based theatre company Shalimar have created a new and exciting piece of work from an ancient tale

■ *Until August 27.*

JO CAIRD