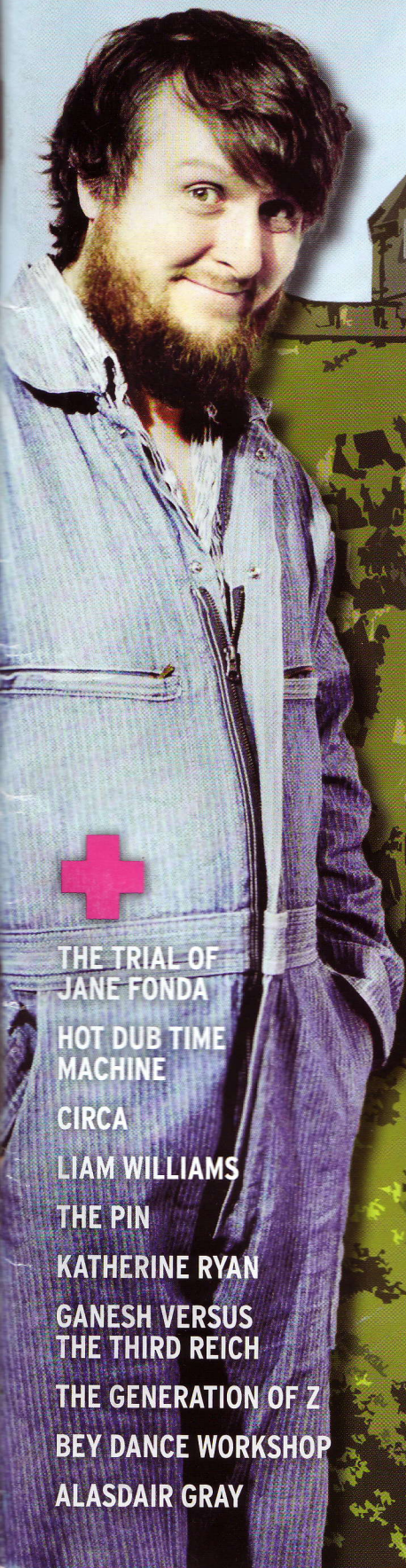


BOOKS | COMEDY | DANCE | KIDS | MUSIC | THEATRE | ART | CLUBS



# KINGS OF THE CASTLE

TIM KEY AND NICK  
HELM GET READY TO  
RULE THE GRAND

SPECIAL  
**FREE**  
EDITION



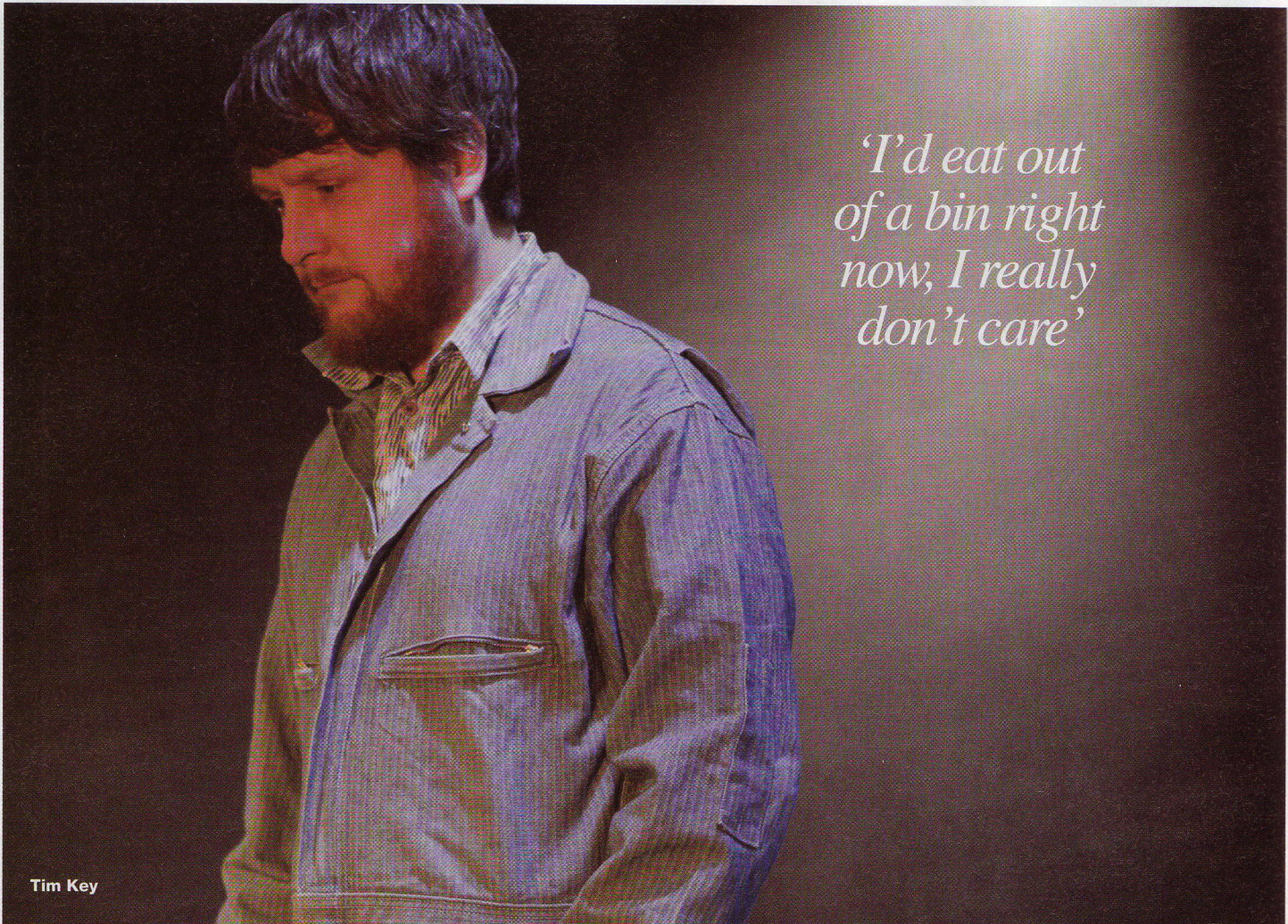
- THE TRIAL OF JANE FONDA
- HOT DUB TIME MACHINE
- CIRCA
- LIAM WILLIAMS
- THE PIN
- KATHERINE RYAN
- GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH
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- BEY DANCE WORKSHOP
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150+ SHOWS  
REVIEWED  
+ HITLIST RECOMMENDATIONS

7 - 14 AUG 2014 | WEEK 2  
[LIST.CO.UK/FESTIVAL](http://LIST.CO.UK/FESTIVAL)

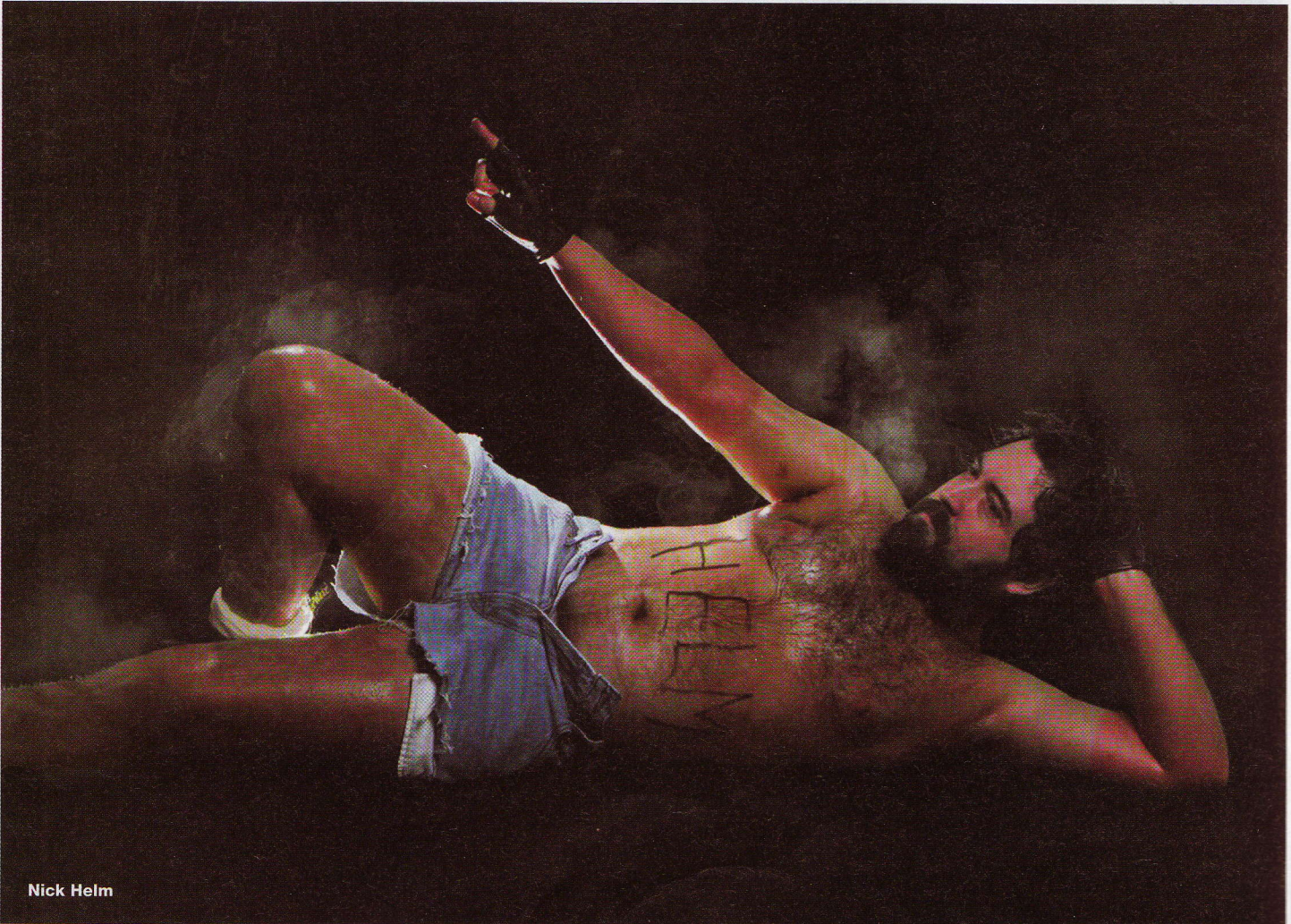
TICKET OFFERS  
**INSIDE**





*'I'd eat out  
of a bin right  
now, I really  
don't care'*

Tim Key



Nick Helm



# Tim Key and Nick Helm walk into a bar...

Two of the Fringe's crowning comedians perform at the Pleasance Grand this week. We got them together for a chat to see how their preparations for Edinburgh were going.

**Words:** Jo Caird

**T**im Key and Nick Helm have both had a busy year. Since being nominated for the Edinburgh Comedy Award for the second time in 2013 for *One Man Mega Myth*, Helm has starred in BBC3 comedy drama *Uncle* and completed filming on his own BBC3 show *Heavy Entertainment*, which comes out in September. Key meanwhile, had a big screen outing opposite Steve Coogan in *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*, and performed his new show, *Single White Slut*, to acclaim in London's West End. This August they will both be bringing individual shows to the Pleasance.

**The List:** You're both playing the Grand this year – Nick for the first time and Tim having performed *Masterslut* there in 2012 – does it feel like a lot of pressure to play such a big space?

**Tim Key:** It's still the same principle. You don't want to take a show up that you don't believe in or people will think, 'well, that's absolute dog shit'. So there's all that pressure that's the same. It's just in a bigger room. There's a lot of comedians I know who are much more relaxed playing a big venue but I get quite freaked out by the idea of it.

**Nick Helm:** Jack Whitehall's doing the O2 Arena and it's like...

**Tim:** That's the thing. In a way it's quite an uncomfortable thing to talk about in an interview because the premise of your question is: 'You're really big-time because you're playing this thing.' We're still fairly low down. There's people playing enormous things...

**Nick:** There's a certain type of audience that appreciates what we do, but in reality the Grand is 750 seats and the O2 Arena is 10,000,

and even the comedy tent at Latitude is 5000. What you're really concentrating on is the fact that you want everyone that comes to your gig in Edinburgh to enjoy themselves and if you can play 750 then you should do it.

**Nick:** You're doing a new show at the moment Tim...

**Tim:** Yeah. But I've done it in London.

**Nick:** You previewed it in Edinburgh last year?

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Whereas I have a six-month working process where I'll start January or February and then it's like an exam and in August I go 'right, stop writing now' and then you have to do whatever you've got. You kind of took your time a bit more. I wish that I could take my time but unless I have deadlines I don't get anything done. But this year I'm not doing a brand new show.

**Tim:** What's this show going to be?

**Nick:** It's going to be like a death metal concert. We're doing it like a big spectacular stadium gig where I do all my songs and some poems and some stand-up and stuff. I started doing Edinburgh in 2001 so I've got 12 years worth of shows that no one's ever seen. Even *Keep Hold of the Gold* [Helm's 2010 Fringe show] – realistically only 1000 people, maybe a little bit more, saw that.

**The List:** It's your greatest hits.





**Nick:** Exactly.

**The List:** Have the audiences at your shows changed since you've started appearing on TV and film?

**Tim:** It's had absolutely no effect on them.

**The List:** Really?

**Tim:** You worry that maybe the next show you make the people who come might just be people who think, 'I'd like to see this guy who's done this' and then what they're getting is something completely different. But I've seen no negative impact on my work. For me it just means that, with a bit of luck, more people will hopefully come to your show. Nick, you've done your own TV shows and stuff . . .

**Nick:** Ever since I did *Uncle* all my audiences seem to be really nice. I have an audience that come because they like me shouting and swearing and being aggressive. Then I have people that come because they like the songs and the poems and stuff. And that's a nice balance. They also can be really open-minded.

**The List:** What do you get up to in Edinburgh when you're not performing?

**Tim:** You're always just looking for somewhere to sit down, somewhere to eat. The worst is when you've got friends or family visiting because every day's just about survival. They're like, 'Where are we going to eat?' I'd eat out of a bin right now, I really don't care.

**Nick:** All the rules go out of the window.

**Tim:** I've eaten many more pies in Edinburgh than anywhere else. Red Bull gets its fair share of attention too.

**Nick:** For the first week I don't go out really, I don't do anything. I'll do the show and I'll listen back to it and then I'll get up in the morning and rehearse and rewrite bits. You've got to spend the first four or five days reworking.

**Tim:** Those first four shows in Edinburgh are horrible. And June and July. Those are the bits that you avoid by not taking up a new show.

**Nick:** So you've just been taking it easy . . . not taking it easy, but . . . June and July are horrific – but not for you right now?

**Tim:** No.

**Nick:** Because you've got yours done. That's fucking brilliant.

**Tim:** I've done previews though.

**Nick:** Yeah, course you have.

**Tim:** I've gone through making sure that it's all okay, but that's not the issue. Putting in that time is not the issue, it's the un-useful time when you're just stressing about your show.

**Nick:** Crying yourself to sleep.

**Tim:** And just not knowing. Actually with this show it was slightly more serene but I remember other shows . . . oh God! I mean just thinking about them makes me want to be sick. It's those moments when you're on a night bus after a preview where you have quite literally died and you're now nine days away . . .

**Nick:** Not literally.

**Tim:** Yeah, sorry, okay. You've metaphorically died. You've survived.

**Nick Helm's Two Night Stand in The Grand, Pleasance Courtyard, 556 6550, 11 & 12 Aug, 11pm, £15.**

**Tim Key: Single White Slut, Pleasance Courtyard, 556 6550, 14–25 Aug, 9.40pm, £12–£16 (£10–£14). Preview 13 Aug, £10.**

## NICK HELM'S BEST BITS

**1997**

Made the voyage to the festival for the first time as part of a school play.

**2001**

Nick formed Bad Ash Productions, a theatre company in which he went on to direct and perform a number of plays.

**2010**

Brought his first solo show *Keep Hold of the Gold* to the Fringe, which ended up being a surprise hit.

**2011**

Won the prize for best joke at the festival with a gag from his show *Dare to Dream*. (For those interested it was: 'I needed a password eight characters long so I picked Snow White and the Seven Dwarves'.) The show also received a Best Comedy Award nomination.



**2012**

Helm made numerous TV appearances throughout the year, including playing Santa on the *8 Out of 10 Cats Christmas Special*.

**2013**

Received his second nomination for the Best Show Award for *One Man Mega Myth*, where he channelled Evel Knievel. It got a 5-star review from this fair publication.

**2014**

Starred in BBC Three sitcom *Uncle*, playing a depressed man-child who forges an unlikely relationship with his offbeat nephew.

## TIM KEY'S KEY MOMENTS

**2001**

Made his first appearance at the Fringe in the Cambridge Footlights show *Far Too Happy*, which received a Best Newcomer Award nomination.

**2004**

Key's solo debut at the Fringe saw him performing a one-man tragicomedy, *Luke & Stella*, that was subsequently made into a BBC Radio 4 series.

**2005**

As well as appearing in Alex Horne's *When in Rome*, Key was in four-man sketch group Cowards, which also included comedians Tom Basden, Stefan Golaszewski and Lloyd Woolf, at the Fringe.

**2007**

He brought his first solo poetry act, *The Slut in the Hut*, to Edinburgh.

**2009**

Key won the Edinburgh Comedy Award for his show *Slutcracker* – an amalgam of poetry and physical comedy.

**2010**

Appeared as Alan Partridge's sidekick – 'Sidekick Simon' – in *Mid Morning Matters* and went on to reprise the role in 2013's *Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa*.

**2011**

Key completed his Slut Trilogy with *Masterslut*, blurring stand-up and performance art and getting a 5-star review from us in the process. (Colin Robertson)

