

John Fleming and the Laughing Horse Free Festival present

MALCOLM HARDEE WEEK

22nd-26th August 2011

Five days of shows to honour the “godfather to a generation of comic talent” (*Daily Telegraph*), the “patron sinner of alternative comedy” (*Guardian*), “the greatest influence on British comedy over the last 25 years” (*Independent*), “one of the most anarchic figures of his era” (*London Evening Standard*), “notoriously outrageous and a prize prankster... a genuine original” (*Scotsman*).

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarghh!

It's The Malcolm Hardee Comedy Punch-Up Debates. And They're Free!

Two debates with star comedy names, chaired by John Fleming, “Baron of the Blognoscenti” and co-author of Malcolm’s autobiography *I Stole Freddie Mercury’s Birthday Cake*.

Monday 22nd: “Comedians are psychopathic masochists with a death wish”.

Tuesday 23rd: “Racist or sexist jokes? It doesn’t matter if they’re funny!”

6.15pm-7.00pm at The Hive

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarrghhh!

It's The Malcolm Hardee Spaghetti-Juggling Contest - Year One

Wednesday 24th & Thursday 25th: 6.15pm-7.00pm - Outside the Beehive Inn

The Fringe’s first annual spaghetti juggling contest. Comedy stars will be taking part; all-comers are welcome. Cooked, loose spaghetti.

All organised by an ex-*Tiswas* researcher. So expect it to be messy and anarchic.

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarghh!

It's The Malcolm Hardee Comedy Awards Show. And It's Free!

Friday 26th: 10.00pm-midnight at The Counting House

Two hour show celebrating the godfather of alternative comedy. In previous years, the show has been Pick of The Fringe for *The Scotsman*, *The Times*, *Time Out* and *The List*. The word “bizarre” is likely to be an understatement. Previous years’ celebrations have included performances from Jo Brand, Jimmy Carr, Omid Djalili, Janey Godley, Hattie Hayridge, John Hegley, Richard Herring, Jools Holland, Phil Kay, Stewart Lee, Simon Munnery, Phil Nichol, Arthur Smith and Johnny Vegas.

The Malcolm Hardee Comedy Awards

The Awards have been running since 2005 and will be presented until 2017.

There are currently three annual awards:

- The Malcolm Hardee Award for Comic Originality
- The Malcolm Hardee Cunning Stunt Award

(for best publicity stunt promoting a show or act at the Edinburgh Fringe)

- The Malcolm Hardee ‘Act Most Likely to Make a Million Quid’ Award

(previous award winners and details at www.malcolmhardee.co.uk/award)

All profits from the shows will go to the charity Mama Biashara - www.mamabiashara.com

For latest news and participants: www.malcolmhardee.co.uk/fringe2011

CONTACT: John Fleming

Daily blog: <http://thejohnfleming.wordpress.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thejohnfleming

Twitter: @thejohnfleming

MALCOLM HARDEE

1950-2005

(This is adapted from the Wikipedia article on Malcolm)

Malcolm Hardee was a South London comedian, author, comedy club proprietor, compere, agent, manager and "amateur sensationalist". He drowned in January 2005.

His high reputation among his peers rests on his outrageous publicity stunts - often at the Edinburgh Fringe - and on the help and advice he gave to successful British alternative comedians early in their careers as "godfather to a generation of comic talent in the 1980s". Fellow comic Rob Newman called him "a hilarious, anarchic, living legend; a millennial Falstaff", while Stewart Lee wrote that "Malcolm Hardee is a natural clown who in any decent country would be a national institution" and Arthur Smith described him as "a South London Rabelais" and claimed with some justification at Malcolm's famous funeral that "everything about Malcolm, apart from his stand-up act, was original".

Though an accomplished comic, Malcolm was arguably more highly regarded as a 'character', a compere and talent-spotting booker at his own clubs, particularly his Tunnel and Up The Creek clubs in Greenwich which gave vital, early and (in the case of the infamous Tunnel) sometimes physically-dangerous exposure to up-and-coming comedians. One journalist claimed: "To say that he has no shame is to drastically exaggerate the amount of shame that he has" and, in its obituary, *The Times* wrote that "throughout his life he maintained a fearlessness and an indifference to consequences".

Malcolm regularly appeared in his own shows and promoted others at the Edinburgh Fringe and arguably his most infamous stunt was in 1983 when, performing at The Circuit venue - a series of three adjoining tents in a construction site with a different show in each tent - he became annoyed by what he regarded as excessive noise emanating nightly from American performance artist Eric Bogosian's neighbouring tent. Malcolm 'borrowed' a nearby tractor and, entirely naked, drove it across Bogosian's stage during his performance. Rivalling this stunt in Fringe infamy, in 1989, Malcolm and Arthur Smith wrote a rave 5-star review of Malcolm's own Fringe show and successfully managed to get it printed in *The Scotsman* under the byline of that influential paper's own comedy critic. At the Fringe in 1996, he attempted to sabotage American ventriloquist David Strassman's Edinburgh show by kidnapping the act's hi-tech dummy, holding it to ransom and sending it back to Strassman piece by piece in return for hard cash. The plan failed.

For latest news and participants: www.malcolmhardee.co.uk/fringe2011

CONTACT: John Fleming

Daily blog: <http://thejohnfleming.wordpress.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thejohnfleming

Twitter: [@thejohnfleming](https://twitter.com/thejohnfleming)

JOHN FLEMING

organiser of the Malcolm Hardee Awards 2005-2017

I am consultant for two off-Broadway theaters in New York, I wrote Malcolm's autobiography and I financed ex-Mr Katie Price, cross-dressing cage-fighter Alex Reid's controversial 2010 feature film debut *Killer Bitch*.

I am Scots, born in Campbeltown and brought up in Campbeltown, Aberdeen and Ilford, Essex. My mother was born in Dunning, near Perth; my father in the Isle of Whithorn, Wigtownshire.

At this year's Edinburgh Fringe, I will be chairing two debates on the comedy business, arranging two spaghetti-juggling events and producing a two-hour variety show for Malcolm Hardee Week, as well as sponsoring three Malcolm Hardee Comedy Awards.

Last year, I staged three shows at the Fringe: Helen Keen's *It Is Rocket Science!* (recently a BBC Radio 4 series), *Keen & Khan - Starstruck!* (with stand-up Helen Keen & ex-NASA astrophysicist Sophia Khan) and *Free Until Famous with Lewis Schaffer*.

At the 2009 Fringe, I produced two Fringe shows: Helen Keen's *The Primitive Methodist Guide to Arctic Survival* and a 90-minute charity event *Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarrghhh! - It's Bollock Relief - The Malcolm Hardee Award Show*. I was also Fringe consultant on Aindrias de Staic's award-winning *The Summer I Did The Leaving* and Lewis Schaffer's show *Bigger and Blacker*.

My TV work, mostly involving talent spotting, has included *Tiswas*, *Game For a Laugh*, *Surprise Surprise*, *The Last Resort with Jonathan Ross*, *Jack Dee's Saturday Night* etc. I have written for *House of Hammer*, *The Independent*, *International Times*, *Screen International*, *Starburst* etc.

As well as writing Malcolm Hardee's autobiography, *I Stole Freddie Mercury's Birthday Cake*, I edited Scots comedian Janey Godley's best-selling autobiography *Handstands in the Dark* and edited (with Malcolm) *Sit-Down Comedy*, an anthology written by 19 stand-ups and I also contributed to the book *Anatomy of the Movies* with Martin Scorsese, Donald Sutherland etc.

TV shows, TV promos/marketing, station launches, written for magazines, edited books, staged variety shows, financed a film; been arrested by the Syrian Army in Beirut; but I cannot juggle cooked spaghetti. I do write a daily blog, though.

I do not make any personal profit from the Malcolm Hardee Awards nor from Malcolm Hardee Week. All profits will go to Kate Copstick's charity Mama Biashara - www.mamabiashara.com

CONTACT: John Fleming

Daily blog: <http://thejohnfleming.wordpress.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thejohnfleming

Twitter: [@thejohnfleming](https://twitter.com/thejohnfleming)

For latest news and participants: www.malcolmhardee.co.uk/fringe2011