

Herald - 13th August 2008
"Really rather wonderful"
Four star review

Ben Moor - Not Everything Is Significant, Pleasance Star rating ****

. . . with less baggage and even more understated, is Ben Moor. Coelacanth, Moor's Herald Angel winning 2005 piece of story theatre, was a charmingly wistful shaggy dog story that was both beautiful and surreal. This latest work is even better in that it's even more beautiful and even more surreal. Moor takes as his starting point a professional footnoter who moves into a flat formerly occupied by a professional biographer. A filled-in diary for the following year and an unfinished biography of the biographer himself becomes a chronicle of a life foretold in a world where poodling is one craze along from dogging, Nike sponsors the OED and Mobius strip clubs are filled with elongated cartoon girls.

As the footnoter corrects and clarifies fact from fiction in a manner spearheaded by both Karl Marx in The Communist Manifesto and Alasdair Gray in Lanark, a parallel universe emerges that wouldn't look out of place in Michael Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius stories if they'd been set in Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities, and the presence of the J G Ballard chain of pubs is a telling detail. And it's these small, seemingly insignificant epiphanies that matter here in a calm, unflashy but utterly evocative manner. Moor tells us of a girl who "moves like a fading continent worried about its future", and you know exactly what he means.

But, as vividly drawn as all this is, as Moor makes clear from the title, not much of this gently mind-bending hour-long delight may actually matter in any way, shape or form. Then again, add up the everyday tos and fros of it all, and all those little footnotes add up to something a whole lot bigger, and really rather wonderful.

Observer - 24th August 2008
"Beautifully performed"
Best of the Fringe

Ben Moor: Not Everything Is Significant (Pleasance)
Suspenseful, thought-provoking and beautifully performed, Moor's one-man show tells the story of a biographer who receives a diary that appears to predict his own death.

Metro - 21st August 2008
"A mind-bogglingly brilliant piece of theatre"
Bewilderingly brilliant

by SHARON LOUGHER - Wednesday, August 20, 2008
Not Everything Is Significant
Ben Moor in Not Everything Is Significant

If you're feeling the effects of a few midday pints, don't pick Ben Moor's one-man show for your afternoon entertainment. But if you can bring a clear head to his surreal, non-linear performance, you're in for a mind-bogglingly brilliant piece of theatre.

Moor introduces himself as a biographer with writer's block. He simultaneously acts as a provider of footnotes for the piece, pointing out his alter ego's inaccuracies and omissions in po-faced detail. Both talk us through the biographer's strange little world.

The plot swings into action when the biographer is sent a diary for the following year - it's already filled with his handwriting, recording future meetings, nights out and an appointment to partake in the mysterious art of poodling.

His struggle to understand the book's existence is explored with humour and surprising emotional depth, toying with ideas of fate, memory, mental illness and even time travel.

It could easily descend into gibberish, but Moor embellishes the convoluted tale with hilarious, one-liner-style details; a visit to a theme park with a rollercoaster called Life ends with a punchline of almost perfect weight and heft.

The conclusion ultimately raises more questions than it answers, but as head-scratchers go, it's one of the warmest and wittiest around.

chortle.co.uk - 19th August 2008
"The jokes are elegant and memorable"
Four star review

Show Rating: Not Everything Is Significant rated 4/5

Though in the theatre section of the programme, Ben Moor's charming and original one-man play contains some of the most brilliantly sublime comic lines of the festival. He's a dry, inventive writer, with a genuine love of cunning wordplay and delightful off-the-wall imagery.

In a festival full of shows desperately stretched to fill an hour, this entertaining, stylish and sometimes beautiful play packs in gags, ideas and plot developments so densely that you almost want to go straight back in and watch it all over again, to pick up the subtleties you know you missed first time around.

Moor plays a biographer who explains how he prefer to examine the lives of others through the minutiae; taking minor details then extrapolating the bigger picture, although, he concedes, that not everything is significant. He also plays the professional footnoter, annotating the biographer's account, adding extra information, correcting inaccuracies – but mainly providing sly jokes to supplement the primary report.

The biographer tells us he's suffering from writers' block, finding easy distractions from his on-off girlfriend and the Rogers Creation, a bizarre and unique piece of music. But when he receives in the post an anonymous package, containing a diary with his movements for the next nine months already filled in... well, then the biography he was working on bites the dust – and the mystery really begins.

The narrative is tangled – by design – and what is actually going on remains agreeably ambiguous. But the ride is an absolute pleasure, as the straight-faced Moor guides us cheerily through parallel worlds of JG Ballard theme pubs, Mobius strip clubs and garden henges. His turn of phrase is exquisite, and the jokes elegant and memorable, it's hard to resist the temptation to quote them all.

Storytelling is in the ascendant in comedy, and there can be few better examples of how to do it than this smart, funny and thoroughly satisfying show.

Reviewed by: Steve Bennett

British Theatre Guide - 15th August 2008
"A fine writer"
Five star review

Not Everything Is Significant
By Ben Moor
Pleasance Courtyard

It is strange to see a self-effacing man return year after year to the brash world of the Edinburgh solo show. Ben Moor has won Fringe Firsts in the past and has every chance of doing so again.

He is a really fine writer with a quirky sense of humour. At times, almost every line seems to be a comic time-bomb and even better, the writing about life's minutiae is highly visual.

This tale of an autobiographer who specialises in nobodies and his footnote writer is well-paced under the direction of Northern Stage's Erica Whyman.

Effortlessly, Moor takes us into an invented world that is humorous in its normality but also owes something to science fiction as both time and reality bend.

A packed theatre loved every moment of this highly-recommended piece of story-telling.

Philip Fisher

Guardian - 12th August 2008

"Irreverent, inventive and hauntingly beautiful"

Four star review

The title of Ben Moor's one-man show could not be more misleading. Whether it is there to make you laugh, or think, to examine your own life in a new light, pretty much every word in this skilfully constructed, mind-twisting piece is significant.

Moor plays two characters: a blocked biographer, given to romanticism and fits of hyperbole, and a po-faced compiler of footnotes, who comments on and strives to correct the biographer's narrative. And what a peculiar narrative it is: just as he is losing all hope in his life, the biographer is sent an "advance diary" for the following year, packed with notes of events yet to happen, all apparently in his own handwriting.

It sounds confusing, yet it makes a wonderful, warped sense on stage, where Moor creates a hilarious parallel universe in which there are JG Ballard-themed pubs, Buddhists ride a rollercoaster called Life (it ends - boom, boom - six feet under ground), and court-appointed muggers routinely inflict punishment beatings on the biographer's kleptomaniac cousin Josh.

Moor's writing can be irreverent, inventive and hauntingly beautiful all at once, notably when he describes the biographer's on-off girlfriend, Meredith, as a woman who "moves like a fading civilisation worried about her future". Sympathetically directed by Erica Whyman, Moor is also a beguiling performer, at times all cartoonish, gangling limbs and rubbery expressions, then suddenly still and wise. By the time the biographer and his footnote shadow begin to blur, it seems that nothing happening outside in the real world is of much significance at all.

Maddy Costa

another source - 10th August 2008

"Wonderfully constructed... witty, precise and quirky"

Not Everything Is Significant Review - Edinburgh Festivals Magazine

Written by Rosie Whitehead

Ben Moor presents us with a strange and intriguing tale where a diary has the power of prophecy and a man has developed procrastination to an art form. He takes on the characters of a failing but cheery biographer who has been sent the mysterious diary and a stern footnoter who has found the biographer's writing at a later date, and has taken it upon himself to correct his inaccuracies and guide us through the narrative. We also meet his willowy and seemingly vacuous ex-girlfriend, his affable yet insulting editor and other characters he comes across along the way. The strength of this piece lies in the script's consistent ability to challenge language and change perceptions of the everyday and each line is purposefully placed and wonderfully constructed. Where it falters though, perhaps, is in its complexity. The beauty of Coelacanth, Moor's 2005 Fringe show, lay in its simplicity and the skill of the solo storyteller. This time, Moor hops in and out of characters, stepping forwards, stepping back, changing voice, changing posture and in doing so distracts us before we've had time to process the significance of his words. The writing itself more than makes up for this shortfall however; it consistently shows itself to be witty, precise and quirky.

broadwaybaby.com - 9th August 2008

"Brilliantly vivid way with words"

This review might not be significant

As I left Ben Moor's new show, Not Everything is Significant, I was accosted by a fellow audience member who noticed my – I thought – carefully concealed press pass. 'Did you understand that?', she said, as if thinking that by my orange lanyard I had the key to some higher critical vision.

I thought for a moment, trying to think of a clever, possibly witty and ultimately enlightening gem of wisdom, gently caressing my laminated critical authority as if trying to summon up its insightful power. 'Yes', I finally said, struggling to continue the sentence which I had begun, then, 'Also no'.

Floundering, my mind racing, trying to imbue my initial three words with something resembling weight, I was grateful for the interjection of someone else who had seen the show. 'That's the point, I think', she helpfully added, coming to my rescue on a white steed, 'that Not Everything is Significant'. 'Yes', I said, 'that's it', before wandering off to reposition my tail from between my legs.

The title of the show is 'Not Everything is Significant' yet even then we are desperate to have clarity and find definitions in order to satisfy ourselves that we understand; that we have the capacity to 'get it'. But in doing so we might attach meanings to things that aren't necessarily there when, perhaps, we should allow ourselves to let it mean what it means to us, subjectively, rather than try to ascertain what it should mean to us all. Perhaps it means nothing. Perhaps it means something. Perhaps it's significant. Perhaps it's irrelevant. We should decide for ourselves.

I first saw Ben Moor at the Latitude Festival doing Robin Ince's Book Club and was struck by his balletic and eccentric poetry, his vivid imaginations and the sincerity of his storytelling. Whilst Not Everything he says is Significant this is no aspersion I'm casting for a great amount of it is and I, personally, will certainly remember many of his sentiments and their beautifully drawn images.

In the show he receives a pre-completed diary in the post for the year to come, cataloguing things which he is yet to do. After initial hesitance he follows the path laid out for him, finding significance where there might possibly not be any and discounting other moments where there might be some. The point appears to be that, as the show's title suggests, significance can be imbued in anything and we will all add weight to different things.

Subsequently, this may appear a vague review but it is intentionally so as I am reluctant to impose my own meaning upon the show. What I will say is that Moor's engaging delivery, brilliantly vivid way with words and apparently generous nature means that he is worth a visit. See him and find the significance for yourself.

[Oli Seadon]

one4review.com - 3rd August 2008

"Exquisitely written"

Four star review

Ben Moor performs his own one man play in a style that is both gentle and compelling. It is an exquisitely written piece full of weird, absurd and comic illusions. The central character is a writer of biographies who is suffering from writer's block, and the story intimately reveals his mental highs and lows. In the background is a shadowy, enigmatic figure who footnotes aspects of the writer's life.

By chance, the writer comes across a strange piece of music called the 'Rogers Creation'. Each individual hearing it has a personal view of what they have heard even down to hearing different instruments. Even more inexplicable, the writer receives through the post in an unstamped letter a

diary in which is recorded the events of his life in the year ahead up to September 22nd. This document is in effect a pre-autobiography. As the story unfolds, the writer has to come to terms with the fact that, whatever he does or whoever he meets, the event is recorded in the diary. It becomes more comic but more chilling when he meets three people who have received similar diaries. To give more details of the mysteries that follow would spoil the ending. This play is a satisfying experience. Ben Moor's calm, controlled delivery laced with humour maintains the tension to a conclusion which will give cause for reflection.

Stage - 4th August 2008
The Stage - STAGE MUST SEE!

Not Everything is Significant
Ben Moor
Pleasance Courtyard until Monday August 25, 2008

Part a rumination on the small details that make up a life, part a questioning of identity and fate, part a ghost story of sorts and part just a collection of very funny one-liners and observations, Ben Moor's hour-long monologue is alternately – and sometimes simultaneously – hilarious and haunting.

Moor tells of a man who discovers a diary for the coming year with his whole life plotted out and who then finds himself living to its dictates. This story is told by a later researcher whose detailed analysis of the first man's life leads to it being eerily mirrored in his own.

The fable is a haunting one, enlivened by Moor's askew humour, which imagines in passing a musician named Handel who isn't talented, though the name opens doors, a service you hire to hide your things so you can have the joy of finding them, and a roller coaster ride called Life that Buddhists keep queuing up to ride again.

While much of the power and charm of the show lie in the writing, Moor's deadpan delivery lets both the thought-provoking concepts and the laughter-provoking inventions sneak up on you, making the hour a continuous string of delights.

Review by Gerry Berkowitz

Financial Times
Edinburgh Fringe
By Ian Shuttleworth

Published: August 14 2008 19:45 | Last updated: August 14 2008 19:45

One Edinburgh Fringe staple is the "me show": an hour of material about the performer or their family, whether theatrical or comic. I have already written of Matthew Zjac's search for the true story of his father, The Tailor of Inverness. Ben Moor's Not Everything is Significant at the Pleasance Courtyard is not, strictly speaking, a "me show"; its tale of a man following the entries of a mysterious, prescient diary, interwoven with that of someone footnoting the first party's writings, is clearly fictional. However, the gracious, lateral-thinking, joyously clever Moor seems to inhabit all his stories. This is a more muted affair than his recent offerings, with less of the wide-eyed, unabashed wonder he can make so surprisingly palatable.

Theatre review: Not Everything is Significant

The Scotsman

Published Date: 12 August 2008

By Claire Smith

NOT EVERYTHING IS SIGNIFICANT

PLEASANCE COURTYARD (VENUE 33)

THIS is a story within a story from Ben Moor, who delights in elegant wordplay and witty conjunctions of imagery. It's the tale of a biographer, who finds a diary, which appears to be filled with instructions for the future, rather than with memories from the past.

By stepping into the world of the diaries, the author – suffering from writer's block – becomes tangled in a world of different narratives, some real, some imaginary and some intended for the book he never gets around to writing.

We meet his past, present and future girlfriend – a woman distinguished by her pregnant pauses, and his editor, a man in a permanent state of rage.

To clarify some of the more confusing moments, we also have the writer of the footnotes – who steps back against a silk hanging to elucidate some of the more entangled moments.

Moor, who is part writer, part comedian and part actor, seems to be searching for his own identity through this tale, which is beautifully written and skillfully told. He's always seemed a little bit too lugubrious for a comedian but this storytelling theatrical style suits his talents well.