There are five productions of Macbeth listed in this year’s theatre programme, including one on a bouncy castle, one with Afro-Caribbean rhythms and this one which has fire and motorcycles.

Mel Giedroyc (again) leads the cast of popular Eurovision musical at the Pleasance. Check out our review on page 16. It’s not “null points”.

Ravenhill For Breakfast

Play On Words

Three’s Company

‘Play On Words’ builds an appealing surrealistic world around depressed actor Fred, who seeks refuge within the four consoling walls of the theatre. He must re-enact his memories of a failed relationship in order to attain both catharsis and clarity over a woman he perceives to have been “taken”, in a plot reminiscent of the Michel Gondry-directed ‘ Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind’. A playfully precocious script provides an excellent angle from which to appreciate this talented young cast. Playwright Tom Crawshaw’s debt to Tom Stoppard gives the play its strong intellectual sub-text with all of the philosophical musings and witty wordplay that this implies. This tendency is softened by the play’s physical comedy, audience participation and experimental presentation. Stoppard for the Gondry generation.  

C. SoCa, 3 - 27 Aug, 9:00pm (10:15pm), prices vary, £26.50, £19.50, £16.50.

tv rating 4/5

Prints Of Denmark

Mixed Company Productions

A clever, fast-paced comedy intending to disentangle notions of multiculturalism from the reductive cliffs of our insidious media. The seven-strong cast take to the stylish stage en masse before demonstrating their flexibility through a variety of sketches. Taking the 2005 controversy of a Danish cartoon’s depictions of the Prophet Muhammad as its basis, this production utilises a familiar satirical sketch show format, adding some moments of originality. When the leader of a Muslim ‘angry mob’ is unable to purchase a Danish flag for protest purposes, the stall owner quips: “But if you burn the flags of all the surrounding countries, Denmark might catch fire symbolically” – this provides one of the play’s many multi-layered critical summations. Cool, ironic, self-referential and consistently amusing, Sweet ECA, 2 - 19 Aug, 7:45pm (8:35pm), £7.50 (£6.30), £5.50, £3.30.

tv rating 4/5

The Rap Canterbury Tales

Babazoo Productions

Boba Brinkman is a genius. With ’The Rap Canterbury Tales’ he has translated three of Chaucer’s tales from middle-English into contemporary hip-hop, bringing the six-hundred-year-old characters to life for 21st century audiences. Not content with this staggeringly clever feat, he performs all three fantastically – alongside his own unique tale – completely inhabiting Chaucer’s Miller, Pardoner and Wife of Bath. In his talented hands they become contemporary believable characters, while remaining true to their Chaucerian roots. As if translating Chaucer into rap and then performing it live were not enough, Brinkman also performed a freestyle rap as an encore, improvised on the spot from words suggested by the audience. A prodigious talent; if he wasn’t so likeable, he’d be a little bit sickening.

Roman Eagle Lodge, 3 - 26 Aug, 8:45pm (9:45pm), £7.50 (£6.30), £5.50, £3.30.

tv rating 3/5

spread

Hourglass

Women and weight. Women and self-image. Women and beauty magazines telling them they’re ugly and fat. All are issues covered in this production, but with an unexpectedly mischievous slant; this is a bemused look at an industry that takes itself too seriously. Bearing the appearance of‘ having been collectively decided by the three performers, the show moves from scene to scene, preferring to communicate through movement and voiceovers rather than dialogue. The scenes differ wildly – the Garden of Eden, a health spa, a kitchen which becomes a war zone. Their ingenuity is quite impressive, and the finished product is tightly structured, well-performed and full of energy. Guaranteed guilt free indulgence.  

Zoe Southside, 1 – 27 Aug (out 13), 7.00pm (8.00pm), £7.00 (£5.00), £5.50, £3.30, £2.50  

226, tv rating 3/5