

# UNDERBELLY PRESS RELEASE

**“The quintessential fringe venue” Financial Times**

**“An atmospheric wonder” The Guardian**

**“A vertical Glastonbury” The Telegraph**

Date: June 2006

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Release

2006 sees Underbelly reinforcing its reputation for bringing the best new theatre from the across the world to the Fringe, while continuing to support home grown new writing. European premieres include the stunningly beautiful **Choon Hyang: A Love Story of the Far East** by Korean Company Theatre Seoul and Patron Company; US play **Talk Radio**, directed by Stewart Lee; **Tossers**, a show that promises to do for juggling what Stomp did for dustbin lids, and talk of the New York Fringe **The Irish Curse**. Canadian hit **One Man Star Wars** also joins the programme for a UK premiere.

New plays by exciting young playwrights also feature; **Radio** by Al Smith (writer of Fringe 2005's **Enola**) and **Polar Bears** by **Jim Kenworth**, writer of **Gob** (Fringe 2003). Aeschylus is updated by Van Badham to become **Persae**, and black and comic epic for the West, and Martin Henshell's (Soho Core Writers Group) **Bitches and Money** tells of a Victorian criminal gang on the run. Eye witness testimony from both sides of a 1943 WWII bombing form the basis for Darren Ormandy's new play **Hamburg**, and **In Pursuit of Cardineo** sees Ken Campbell delving into Shakespeare's notorious lost opus, using audience suggestion to create a unique work of theatre each day. And fresh from a storming success in London, Chris England's new play **Breakfast with Jonny Wilkinson**

## RELIGION

A number of new plays at Underbelly take the temperature of the current climate of religious debate and cultural intolerance. Western society's ignorance of Islam is explored in **We Don't Know Shi'ite** and **Man & God** places Jesus in a popularity contest with a fake prophet with better PR. Meanwhile one of the darker chapters in the history of the Catholic Church gets an airing in **Breaking the Pope**, which exposes the grim reality of the notorious Magdalene Laundries. And **The Cosmic Family**'s dark satirical cabaret offers a window into new age evangelism.

## **THE TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION**

Religion, race, sex and drugs are all covered by Eric Bogosian's play **Talk Radio**. Based on the true story of Alan Berg, a Denver radio shock-jock who was killed by white supremacists, the European premiere of this 1980s play brings the free speech debate firmly to the fore. Directed by Stewart Lee (*Jerry Springer The Opera*), the cast includes Phil Nichol, Mike McShane, Will Adamsdale and Stephen K Amos.

**Bloggers – Real Internet Diaries** is a piece of verbatim theatre that uses personal internet diaries to create a play that follows the lives of 11 characters. These online testimonies provide an unique and honest window into the varied private lives and thoughts of some of the world's 40 million bloggers.

**One of Our Ain** tells the story of a woman who realises that her father was responsible for the disappearance of her best friend in the 1960s. Based on her book *Where There is Evil*, Sandra Brown, leading campaigner for survivors of abuse and 2005's Scotswoman of the Year brings her touching and absorbing story to the stage.

## **MENS HEALTH – 10 STEPS TO ROCK SOLID ABS**

Based on real messages left by sperm donors for their future children, **The Sperm Monologues** provides a funny and touching insight into ideas of fatherhood and inheritance. **Present** by Continuum Theatre also concerns messages left from one generation for another, as a godfather imparts his wisdom to his newborn godchild.

From New York, **The Irish Curse** (winner New York Fringe Outstanding Playwriting 2005) is about a group of men who meet weekly in a church hall to discuss their shortcomings, or more specifically, their dicks. Written by award-winning author and director Martin Casella, this sharp comic play takes a revealing look at the less often discussed body image issues of men.

For further information please contact

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

**Smirnoff Underbelly, Venue 61, Cowgate, Edinburgh**  
**Smirnoff Baby Belly, Venue 88, Niddry Street, Edinburgh**  
**E4 UdderBELLY, Venue 300 Bristo Square, Edinburgh**  
**Cow Barn, Venue 201, Bristo Square, Edinburgh**  
**Box Office 0870 745 3083**  
**Edinburgh Festival Fringe 3-27 August 2006**

**General Information**

Underbelly is now very much at the forefront of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, a major series of venues, but venues that still retains their site-specific, intimate and unique atmosphere. Having started as a single venue for five shows, Underbelly will in 2006 be programming over 140 shows into twelve performance spaces in four venues with an emphasis on new writing and new talent. In the last three years it has played host to the winner of the Perrier Newcomer Comedy Award (2003), the winner of the Perrier Comedy Award (2004), Perrier Newcomer nominee (2004), 4 Fringe First Award winners (2003 and 2004), the winner of the Writers Guild Award (2005), the winner of the Malcolm Hardee Award (2005) and bands such as Keane, The Thrills, Athlete and Nizlopi who are all now at the top of the British music scene.