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LEISURE

Darwen comedy sketch show heading to Edinburgh

2:57pm Friday 11th July 2008

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By Jemma Dobson »

A monthly sketch show which has had Darwen Library Theatre audience in stitches is set to get an airing at the world famous Edinburgh Festival.

The monthly Second Saturday Sketch Show has attracted growing crowds, including large numbers of regulars since its creation 12 months ago.

Among them has been Manchester comedian Roland Gent who has been so impressed with the innovative show that he is funding the group's festival appearance, next month.

Roland said: "I'd been looking for a show to take to Edinburgh and when I saw this one I knew I'd found what I was looking for.

"I hadn't laughed so much in ages and to say I was mightily impressed is an understatement.

"I didn't hesitate to put my money where my mouth is and although there are a lot of sketch shows in Edinburgh this year I'm confident we'll stand out.

"This is a top quality show. I just wish I was in it!"

And the comedians behind the show hope that an appearance at the highlight of the comedy calendar could put their show on the UK map — but first of all they need your help.

Fronted by comedian Martin Cassidy — who has previously successfully co-ordinated a monthly night of stand-up at King George's Hall in Blackburn — the group want the audience at the show tomorrow night to vote for their favourite sketches which they will take with them to Edinburgh.

Second Saturday is very different from the usual stand-up shows Martin has become so well known for.

Rather than a comedian getting a few minutes to do a solo stand-up routine, a small team of writers create and perform a series of three minute sketches.

Regular characters make an appearance in a different scenario each time and current crowd favourites include Tod and Ted, typical Brits abroad.

Then there are charity shop workers, Bob and Pat and Texas Hillbilly Billy Bob to name but a few.

All the characters are based on people the writers have met in their lives.

As well as Martin, the comedy team behind the show is Paula Bland and Malcolm McQuoid — both teachers by day, Susanne Hawks, Rob Hallam and Martin Davis, aka the Mighty Swab.

Martin said: "Our ultimate aim is to keep this base here in Darwen and then have travelling shows which tour the country.

"The opportunity of appearing at the Edinburgh Festival could be the beginning of something brilliant.

"But we've really struggled to decide which sketches should make the final show, and we still have too many!



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So we thought we'd let the audience decide.

"We'll perform about 15 sketches on Saturday and ask the audience to choose 10.

"We'll be handing out voting cards for the audience to chose which of our best bits we take to the festival."

* See Martin and the gang at Darwen LLibrary Theatre tomorrow night, details from the box office 01254 706006. They perform at Venue 260 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe from August 10 to 16. Tickets for this show are available from 0131 226 0000.

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