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Edinburgh Festivals

## Edinburgh Festival Fringe dance, physical theatre and circus reviews: Cirque Alfonse:

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Roll up, roll up for anarchic farmyard antics, high- flying trampoline work and a dance two- hander with a very good dog in our latest round- up of Fringe highlights. Reviews by Kelly Apter and Fergus Morgan

By The Newsroom  
Thursday, 18th August 2022, 11:17 am  
Updated Thursday, 18th August 2022, 11:25 am

**Cirque Alfonse: Animal \*\*\*\***

*Underbelly's Circus Hub on the Meadows (Venue 360), until 27 August (not 22)*

Since arriving like a brick through a window with Barbu in 2015, Cirque Alfonse has become a Fringe staple. Very much a family affair, the Quebecois company has a slightly anarchic approach to circus, and probably life, that sets it ever so slightly apart from the crowd. Animal may not have the same intensity as Barbu, but like their show Tabarnak before it, takes a theme and runs with it.

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*Cirque Alfonse visit  
Love Gorgie city farm*

This time around, we're down on the farm and everything they lift, stand on or throw is related to animal husbandry. Milk churns, cowbells, wheelbarrows, feed

buckets and even a mini tractor for the 70-year-old patriarch of the family, all come into play. At the core (quite literally in terms of their cast-iron stomach muscles) is a much-practiced ability to lift and balance. Body towers on teeterboards, acrobatic balancing atop two milk churns, flips with multiple turns high in the air and a Chinese pole balanced on broad shoulders are just some of the farmyard antics.

Between these impressive feats, in true Alfonse style, there are moments of light relief. A large flock of plastic chickens is turned into juggling batons, three men take part in competitive egg juggling (with grandpa clearing up the inevitable mess) and a whole lot of clucking and wing flapping fills the gaps. All the while the band plays on, delivering catchy and uplifting original songs (in French) and, on occasion, playing and executing a circus skill simultaneously.

This close-knit circle of family and friends has been going for 17 years and, if the curtain call is anything to go by, its future is secure. Joining their family on stage, two children and a baby are individually lifted high in the air by one strong hand without a glimmer of fear. The next generation of Alfonse stars is on its way. **Kelly Apter**