

» Previews

Date with a diva – or her daughter if she's too busy

Acclaimed Edinburgh Festival show

by **Nathalie Raffray**

nathalie.raffray@archant.co.uk

With 114 films, nine husbands and five facelifts to her name, *An Evening with Patti DuPont* is one date with a Hollywood diva you won't want to miss. There might, however, be one small problem.

"I really like the idea of having a show where the main character never shows up," says comedian Anna Emerson. "It's a challenge for me as a writer and performer to sell it as *An Evening with Patti du Pont*, obviously as a comedy, but to immediately disappoint the audience and spend the rest of the show trying to win them back. So the show is full of jokes," she adds, "to show the audience she might not be coming but you're still going to get an enjoyable hour."

Emerson's critically acclaimed show is playing one final night at the Museum of Comedy later this month, following its success at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August.

She plays DuPont's clumsy, awkward daughter, Linda, who is forced to appear in her place.

"By not having her in the show I could create a picture of this real monster, probably more extreme than anything you can do on stage. Someone performing that character puts a limit on it, but to be talk-

ing about her, showing clips of her life and telling stories, creates an image of this awful and ridiculous woman."

For Newington Green resident Emerson – who is part of the comedy trio The Boon Jennies, and won a Bafta Rocliffe sitcom competition with friend and fellow writer Lizzie Bates – this is her first solo outing as a performer with no-one to share the responsibilities that come with it.

Energy

"Performing on your own you have to have a lot of energy and really keep the momentum up," she says.

"You have to enjoy the material. My worry was that half way into the Edinburgh run I might stop enjoying my own show, but I carried on enjoying it because you try out different ways of working with the audience and as long as you can bring in new stuff you can keep it interesting."

The 32-year-old developed an interest in comedy in her early teens, watching figures such as French and Saunders and Alan Partridge. "As a very young child I remember liking Mr Bean. I'm not sure that kind of clowning is quite what I'm into now but I remember thinking he was hilarious."

Very timid, she found she was



■ Anna Emerson performs *An Evening With Patti DuPont*

Picture: Idil Sukan

able to make people laugh when she went to youth theatre and did comedy. "It was a nice antidote to the shyness. As you make people laugh there's someone to join in. I feel a bit ambivalent sometimes about performing but the lovely thing about comedy is that people let you know they're enjoying it and appre-

ciating it." Her show was inspired in part by reading parts of autobiographies of Hollywood stars. "I'd hesitate to say it was based on anyone in particular but there are several examples of mother-daughter relationships in Hollywood.

"The character I play as the daughter is probably based on me. I

think I'm a shy awkward person so it's nice to take that, put it on stage and make it part of the story and exaggerate it."

■ **An Evening With Patti DuPont runs at the Museum of Comedy in Bloomsbury on September 25. Visit pattidupont.com**

Vanessa shakes up classical music though social media

At just 26-years-old, Vanessa Benelli Mosell is one of classical music's leading young performers and one of its most effective forces for reaching new, tech-savvy generations.

The Italian-born pianist came to England four years ago and, after studying for a Masters in performance at the Royal College, has built up a following through Facebook, YouTube and Instagram – all of which she uses to post recordings and videos displaying her virtuosity, technical brilliance and sensitive musical insight.

"I look to be always updated with the latest ways of communication," says the Holloway resident.

"I'm always very open to all these kinds of possibilities as this is actually a way just to spread the music; it's not about yourself, it's



■ Vanessa Benelli Mosell

not about the managing, it's only one part of the music and how to

reach as many people as possible." Having founded her reputation

on classical and chamber music, Benelli Mosell is internationally

renowned for her interpretation of *Klavierstücke* by Karlheinz Stockhausen – an influential former mentor alongside Yuri Bashmet, who previously awarded her the Elba Festival Prize.

However, her latest project, which comes to Kings Place this Saturday, will see her team up with cellist Matthew Barley to perform a series of folk-influenced classical works by the likes of Tsintsadze, Janacek, Schumann and Bartok.

For Benelli Mosell, the long-planned collaboration is an exciting departure from her usual musical style. She says: "It's focusing on the folk tunes so it's something that lots of people really feel, with easy melodies and strong rhythmical elements. Of course it's kind of a feeling of freedom when you play this and also the approach with the instrument is closer. You must research for this relationship as you know the original musicians; they actually do it for the pleasure of playing the instrument and transferring this pleasure to the audience."

■ **Matthew Barley and Vanessa Benelli Mosell perform *Classical Works; Folk Roots* at King's Place this Saturday. Tickets are £6.50 online. Visit kingsplace.co.uk**