

Rascal Rebecca's always animated

Rebecca Humphries talks to **Duncan Hall** about her new Disney-inspired show

AS A YOUNG girl Rebecca Humphries (pictured right) knew exactly what she wanted to be when she grew up.

"I remember telling my reception class teacher I was going to be a princess," she says.

"The teacher had to break it to me gently that it wasn't going to happen."

That ambition to ride in royal carriages and marry a prince arose from Humphries's childhood obsession with Disney films – something still part of her life as she brings *Dizney Rascal* to the Brighton Comedy Fringe.

"Personally, as a 28-year-old human being, if they made Disney princess dresses in my size I would wear them all the time," she says.

Last month she went on a trip to Disneyworld Florida with her partner, Brighton comic Seann Walsh – her first visit as an adult.

"We were going to go to India after the Edinburgh Fringe, but we forgot to get our jabs – so we went to Disneyworld instead..."

Dizney Rascal is Humphries's first Edinburgh show, following starring roles in sitcoms *Big Bad World*, *Seann Walsh's World* and appearances in sketch shows *Cardinal Burns* and *Come Fly With Me*.

Using songs, sketches, spoken word and projections, the show examines Humphries's obsession with Disney films, and the role they played in how she saw the world growing up.

"It's a Disney show for adults who have

BRIGHTON COMEDY FRINGE: DIZNEY RASCAL

Otherplace, Bar Broadway, Steine Street, Brighton, Saturday, October 25 and Sunday, October 26

grown up on Disney, and theoretically grown out of it," she says, admitting she didn't have to do any research for the final production.

"In your 20s you start to figure out life and think that maybe my childhood told me a few untruths."

Along the way Humphries examines the changing roles of princesses in Disney films, tells of her experiences as a real-life *Mary Poppins* after leaving drama school and reveals the formula behind a good Disney Princess song with the help of pianist Jo Cichonska.

The changing role of the princess in Disney movies is something Humphries takes apart in the show.

"Disney is reimagining the princess as a role model," she says. "When I was a child all the films were telling me it's great to be strong and your own person, but you all want to marry a prince and be wealthy forever and that will all be forgotten. *Frozen* [the latest Disney hit] wasn't about romantic love – it was about being a sister and loving someone in that way. Both female protagonists were

really strong. Disney is becoming quite progressive.

"On the flipside little boys are watching a lot of violence. The show picks up on the absurdity of that."

She admits she found performing her first show terrifying.

"It was scary being in a different world," she says. "There were many occasions where I said: 'I don't want to do this anymore' and threw my toys out of the pram."

What turned it round was an absolute disaster of a first show.

"I was doing a half-hour set but the projector didn't work," she says. "It was probably the best thing that could have happened – I knew it would never be as bad as that again."

When the show went to Edinburgh it benefited from an early four-star review by *Time Out*, and ended up selling out its run.

Humphries is still deciding whether to return next year with a bigger version of the same show, or to write a sequel.

She has just finished filming an ITV2 series with Jack Whitehall called *Cockroaches*, set in the aftermath of a nuclear apocalypse. And when she speaks to *The Guide* she is on a break in rehearsals for a world premiere production at Richmond's Orange Tree Theatre.

The new play, *Pomona*, by Alistair McDowell, which opens on Wednesday, November 12, is set after an outbreak of the Ebola virus.

"Specifically it involves prostitutes in



Manchester," she says, having spent most of the afternoon in tears and being beaten up.

"I'm channelling Ariel in the form of an abused wife!"

essential info

Starts 4pm, tickets £8.50/£7. Call 07800 983290

more comedy fringe

Moonshine

Otherplace at The Marwood, Ship Street, Brighton, Friday, October 24, 8pm, £8/£6.50

BRIGHTON-BASED poet and prankster – most famous for inspiring Kevin Smith's forthcoming walrus-based horror *Tusk* - Chris Parkinson presents satirical and absurd verse.

Become Ben Target

Otherplace at Bar Broadway, Steine Street, Brighton, Saturday, October 25, 9pm, £9/£7.50

A CHANCE to catch the 2011 Leicester Mercury Comedian Of The Year and 2012 nominee for Edinburgh Comedy Award Best Newcomer trophy in his latest highly physical show.

Jonny Berliner: Science Songs

Otherplace at Bar Broadway, Steine Street, Brighton, Wednesday, October 29, 7.30pm, £8.50/£7

REGULAR Robin Ince collaborator Jonny Berliner plays geekpop songs musing on everything from atoms to animals.

George Egg: Anarchist Cook

Otherplace at Bar Broadway, Steine Street, Brighton, Wednesday, October 29, and Thursday, October 30, 9pm, £8.50/£7

HOTEL room survival cookery demonstrated live on stage by Brighton's own George Egg in a show which is not only funny but smells good too.

A Night Out with ABBA and Esme

Otherplace at Bar Broadway, Steine Street, Brighton, Thursday, October 30, 7.30pm, £8.50/£7

A DOUBLE bill of character comedy featuring Mark Blayney's ABBA-inspired life coach and Karen Sherrard's TV gardener Esme de Flange.



George Egg: *Anarchist Cook*