

THE ORNATE JOHNSONS
WINNERS OF THE BRIGHTON FESTIVAL
BEST COMEDY AWARD MAY 2006
NOMINEES 2007

The Return of The Ornate Johnsons!

Following their critically acclaimed BBC TV show (*The Ornate Johnsons' Edwardian Spectacular BBC 4 May/June 2007*), their critical and commercial smash-hit show at The Arts Theatre in London's West End (31st July to 11th August 2007), their award nominated run at The Udderbelly as part of The Brighton Festival (May 2007 – Nominated for the Best Comedy Award – Winners in 2006), their total sell-out residency at The Soho Theatre (June 2006), and their headline sell-out run at the Kilkenny Arts Festival (August 2006), and not one, but two National tours, industry favourites **The Ornate Johnsons** come back home with their post-post-modern brand of sketch show comedy.

Formed of five comedians who have worked together since the early 90's, The Ornate Johnsons present an evening of non-stop sketches. Unhindered by theme or convention, their material and characters are free to roam in space and time.

The Ornate Johnsons are **Brian Mitchell, Dave Mounfield, Clea Smith, Laurence Relton** and **Glen Richardson**. Individually they have all had success writing for TV and radio, including *Slightly Filthy*, written by Brian Mitchell for ITV and starring all of the Ornate Johnsons. Performing on and off together over two decades, they have worked closely with comedians including Jo Caulfield, Matt Lucas, Victor Lewis-Smith, Count Arthur Strong, Jerry Sadowitz and Boothby Graffoe and have attracted fans from across the industry.

Highlights from their combined CVs include a Perrier nomination and Fringe Report award (for Jo Neary's 2004 show, for which Brian wrote the songs), deserting comedy for a career in law (Laurence), penning gags for Basil Brush (Brian), writing and performing on Radio 2's *The Day The Music Died* (Glen) and Radio 4's *It's That Jo Caulfied Again* (David) . Their credits also include writing and performing in *The People vs Jerry Sadowitz* and *Live and Kicking* and writing an original screenplay for the director of *The Full Monty* for Ealing Studios. Together they have performed live as The Ornate Johnsons and with The Cheeky Guides and created a series for Radio 4 as well as their *Slightly Filthy* TV series.

For further information please contact Nick Ranceford-Hadley at Noel Gay on 020 7836 3941 or NHadley@noelgay.com or visit us on www.ornatejohnsons.com

THE ORNATE JOHNSONS

Press for The Ornate Johnsons'

The Evening Standard – Bruce Dessau * * * *

“The Writing is pin-sharp, the knowing performances effortless and the laughs flow from start to finish”

The Guardian

“Jerry Sadowitz calls them the best sketch group since Python. Frankly, who are we to argue?”

The Times

“Hugely talented slick sketch act. They may not really be particularly decorative, but they are very, very funny.”

The Daily Telegraph

“Those who despair of today's trend for punchline-resistant TV sketch comedy will be heartened to hear of a sketch troupe wedded to the old-fashioned notion of having actual jokes.”

Three Weeks * * * * *

“Like a big comedy pie, this hilarious sketch show will fill your belly with laughter and keep you coming back for more. The group serves up slice after slice of comedy gems with expert timing and fresh ideas that leap from the stage and tickle your insides.... A refreshing, vibrant show full of laugh out loud sketches.”

Inside Comedy * * * *

“A real treat ... sketches that were absurdly funny and good-natured with humour that was unashamedly tongue-in-cheek.”

What's On Stage * * * * *

“Hilarious! I laughed until I did a bit of wee. Edgy, surreal, affectionate and very, very silly. The Ornate Johnsons are essential viewing.”

BBC Southern Counties

“Comedy Royalty...genuinely fantastic, original, playful, surreal and dynamic.”

Urban Junkies

“British Comedy as it ought to always be”

The Arts Theatre Run Pick of the Week in:

Time Out (no.1), The Guardian (No.1), The Times (No.1), The Sunday Times (No.1), The Saturday Times (No.1), The Independent (No.1), The Sunday Telegraph (No.1), The Evening Standard (No.1), The Metro (No.1), London Lite (No.1), The London Paper(No.1), The Ham & High.

The Soho Theatre Run Pick of the Week in:

The Guardian five weeks running ; number 1 for three weeks.

Time Out five weeks running

The Sunday Times (no.1) , The Daily Telegraph (no.1), The Evening Standard (no.1), The Independent (no.1), The Times and Metro (no.1).

Pick of the Month: LBC Radio no. 1 Theatre Choice

Pick of The Summer: The Observer - Fifty Hottest Things To Do This Summer in the UK

THE ORNATE JOHNSONS

What Our Peers Say

"The best sketches since Python."
Jerry Sadowitz

"Utterly hilarious sketches."
Lucy Porter, Chortle

"Why these guys don't have their own TV show or World religion is a mystery to me...They are very, very good."
Logan Murray

"Charming yet grotesque, literate yet daft..."
Graham Duff (Writer of "Ideal" (BBC2) and "Nebulous" (BBCR4))

"Mindboggling."
Count Arthur Strong

"The songs are fantastic!"
Stewart Lee

"The best sketches I've seen in years"
Victor Lewis Smith

"If life were a box of chocolates, the OJ's would be creamy dairy milk caramel with a pair of big nuts in the middle."
Patrick Monahan

"I loved it. It was slick, funny - the energy and pace are fantastic!"
Richard Dyball (Dyball and Kerr).

"The Ornate Johnsons tap into that very British anger and dissatisfaction that is at the root of all great comedy, they're incredibly funny and audiences are instantly charmed by them"
Jo Caulfield

"The Ornate Johnsons changed my life"
Gary Le Strange (Perrier Award Winner 2003)

"Daft and absurd. I laughed and laughed and laughed."
Guy Venables

THE ORNATE JOHNSONS

ORNATE JOHNSONS – COLLECTIVE CV

The Ornate Johnsons are Brian Mitchell, Dave Mounfield, Laurence Relton, Glen Richardson and Clea Smith, ably supported by Joseph Nixon.

The Ornate Johnsons first started in 1992. Collaborating with such luminaries as Matt Lucas, Jo Caulfield, Steve Furst, Paul Putner and Jerry Sadowitz, they played a significant part in the early 90's revival of live sketch comedy. Then they gave up.

They have run the gamut of writing/performing from sketches and theatre to television and feature film, via radio and musical comedy. Highlights include writing and performing in *Slightly Filthy* for Lisa Clark at LWT, a season as head-writers on *Live & Kicking* (BBC), providing additional material for *The People vs. Jerry Sadowitz* (Channel 5), penning gags for Basil Brush (Entertainment Rights) and writing the songs for the 2004 Perrier nominated show *Joanna Neary is Not Feeling Herself*, as head sketch-writers and performers on *It's That Jo Caulfield Again* for two series (Radio 4), *The Day the Music Died* (Radio 2), *The Ornate Johnsons Radio Show* (Paul Spencer) and writing an original screenplay for Peter Cattaneo, director of *The Full Monty*.

They founded, hosted and ran *The Comedy Diary* and *Take This And Shove It* at Brighton's Komedia and compere regularly at *The Hampstead Clinic* and *Ealing Broadway* comedy clubs. They have performed with Jerry Sadowitz (*The People Versus Jerry Sadowitz* (Channel 5)), Count Arthur Strong (*The Count Arthur Strong Radio Show* Radio 4), Boothby Graffoe (*Following People*) and *The Treason Show*.

Current projects are a series of one hour shows in development with the BBC for BBC 4, and a sit-com in development with the BBC.

They have won The Panasonic People's Choice Award for their work on *The People Versus Jerry Sadowitz*; The Brighton Festival Best Comedy Award 2006, and Hot Stars of Film accolade from Screen International, for the romantic comedy *Perfect Scents*.

THE ORNATE JOHNSONS

Full Reviews

Old school but still funny

Reviewed by Bruce Dessau, Evening Standard (30 May 2006)

Evening Standard * * * *

When it comes to snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, this show takes some beating. Shortly before their Soho run began, The Ornate Johnsons' leading light, Joanna Neary, withdrew due to other commitments. Clea Smith stands in and the switch is seamless.

There is little groundbreaking about this experienced quintet, but they do old-school gags magnificently. The emphasis is on the parody of familiar formats. The writing is pin-sharp, the knowing performances effortless and the laughs flow from start to finish.

Clea Smith is particularly impressive as the soft-rock newsreader who delivers bulletins in the style of Meat Loaf 's power ballads. Equally memorable is the cartoonish restaurant skit, which exacts snot-garnished revenge on Michael Winner.

Occasionally the influences are too obvious. The speed-dating send-up has the rhythms of Python's Argument sketch, while the sports commentary on a gluttonous hubby is descended from the excitable description of Mel Smith's vodka-drinking darts player. Though full marks to Dave Mounfield, who digests nightly pies for his art.

The Ornate Johnsons do hark back rather than forwards. But when it is this funny, who cares?

The Ornate Johnsons

The Soho Theatre

Three Weeks

Like a big comedy pie, this hilarious sketch show will fill your belly with laughter and keep you coming back for more. The group serves up slice after slice of comedy gems with expert timing and fresh ideas that leap from the stage and tickle your insides. The fantastic, slap-stick sketches are fast paced and diverse, and include a version of the news carried out in a Meatloaf, soft rock fashion and a drug deal carried out in picture form. While the show was not seamless, the failing props and occasional misplaced line added to the personal feel of the performance and showed the professionalism of the team. A refreshing, vibrant show full of laugh out loud sketches.

TW rating: 5/5

THE ORNATE JOHNSONS

Blogs

whatsonstage.com

Took a small group of people to the Soho Theatre Studio on Saturday night to see a new comedy troupe called 'The Ornate Johnsons' and we had a whale of a time.

They perform a sketch show in live stand up and whilst some of it won't appeal to people who don't like swearing or mentions of s.x, I loved it.

The other people who took a chance - both fans of Monty Python and Not the Nine O'Clock News - also loved it, especially the Soft Rock News and take off of "Who Will Buy..."

Recommend booking in advance to get some tickets for the 100 seat studio as if they go to Edinburgh, I expect BBC3 or C4 will sign them up for a series.

5 Stars

Have seen it twice now and encouraged six teenagers to see it (three were my own) and everyone thought it was fantastic which I guess indicates that the O-Js appeal to the a range of ages - although my parents live in Cornwall so it was a bit much to expect them to come. Highlights for me were the Oliver adapted song, the shopping centre and of course the good reverend. Get them on TV now, but with cheap sets and old skool comedy production values. I KNOW thats what the kids want *Show has nearly bankrupted me this month.*

Have just returned from one of the most entertaining shows I have been to. Great set of sketches only made better by the intimacy of the theatre. High points were the trials of Lord Battenburg, 'Who will buy...' and Pie eating as well as the 1960's social comedy 'Ladies shoes!'. Amazing! *I, like many men of my age, go to the toilet...*

5 Stars

Hilarious! I laughed until I did a bit of wee. Highly English: edgy, surreal, affectionate and very, very silly. Particular highlights were the Battenburg sketch, the fat man eating a pie, and the Bagpuss sketch ("and Emily sacked him..."). The Ornate Johnsons are essential viewing. *Steve Law*

Holly Finch

...went to see a fantastic play at the soho theatre called 'The Ornate Johnsons'...a series of bafflingly hilarious, only the british could create, comedy sketches

<http://hollyfinch.blogspot.com/2006/05/narratives-security-reports-and.html>

Old Grey – My Space

Today I saw the Ornate Johnsons at the Soho Theatre. 'And then emily fired him..' 'Pieman' 'The trials of Lord Battenburg' '1960's social comedy' 'Ladies shoes!' 'Perfecto!' Wow. Just wow.
<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=42845146>