

Fringe Review – Scroobius Pip: Words

The bearded boss of spoken word has a word or two for the Edinburgh Fringe

By [Jordan Licht](#), Deputy Arts Editor (2012/13)
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Rating: ★★★★★

Since the mid-noughties Scroobius Pip has been a pioneering figure on the spoken word scene, renowned for his sober, thought-provoking material.

So when the poet, who refers to himself as Pip, opened his set with a sugar-sweet disco tune, I wondered if I had accidentally wandered into the wrong venue.

But apparently this was only the ironic prologue to the characteristically sober stuff: a poem about self-harm, followed by one about accepting death, and another one about unrequited love (this last one he insisted was the optimistic part of the gig).

In other words, not exactly light and frothy Wednesday night entertainment. Pip pays homage to the beat poets of the 50s and the likes of Lennie Bruce with his anti-establishment protest writing, but what strikes most about his poems is their directness, their philosophical musing, exploring diverse personas and psychological issues from different perspectives.

As long as you walk in with an open mind you're likely to leave having learnt something new, have your opinions reaffirmed or redefined. But it's not all so serious.

Though he warns not to expect much on the comedy front, Scroobius Pip has the wit and the charisma to outdo many an Edinburgh fringe stand-up comedian, and has the audience erupting with laughter pretty solidly throughout. It's this contrast between humour and serious content that characterises 'Words'.

Though comedy is there in abundance, 'Words' is challenging, mind-piercing, food-for-thought. If you were hoping for some easy listening, you will only be disappointed.



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