

# Reviews of David Crowe 2005 Edinburgh Festival

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**FRINGE COMEDY**  
By Edd McCracken

IN a dark city, down a dark street, in a dark pub, down some dark stairs (mind your head), in a dark basement lurks the brightest comedy night of the Fringe – the Velvet Laughter Masters Series. At other venues around town comedians are hurled at punters like hot oil from castle ramparts upon invading hordes, in the hope that at least one will make an impact. But here, only three comedians have graced the stage – Scott Capurro, Dwight Slade, and to round off the month, the wonderful **David Crowe**. It is not so much an all-out assault, as a devastating exercise in masterful programming, a sleek James Bond to the Pleasance's bludgeoning US Army.

From the outset Crowe declares this is going to be the smartest hour of the Fringe. To prove it he runs a gamut of topics from Shakespeare and the Bible to an acute five minute routine comparing America's need for oil to drug addiction. "What ifs" form the backbone of the show, a traditional spring-

## FRINGE COMEDY

**DAVID CROWE**  
EDINBURGH COMEDY ROOM

★★★★★

**DEMETRI MARTIN: THESE ARE JOKES**

GEORGE SQUARE THEATRE

★★★★★

**JANEY GODLEY IS INNOCENT**  
SMIRNOFF UNDERBELLY

★★★★

**FIONA O'LOUGHLIN**  
ASSEMBLY ROOMS

★★

ALL SHOWS END TONIGHT

board into flights of fancy and surrealism. In the hands of many comics this is a painfully limp device, but Crowe uses it to forge a cast-iron vertebrate. This is stand up in its purest form. No bells, whistles, PowerPoint presentations or gimmicks. It is just one man against one audience, armed with a

gallery of facial expressions, the ability to mimic a great ape and some supreme material. Crowe's right: it's probably the smartest hour of the Fringe. It's also probably the funniest.



## COMEDY

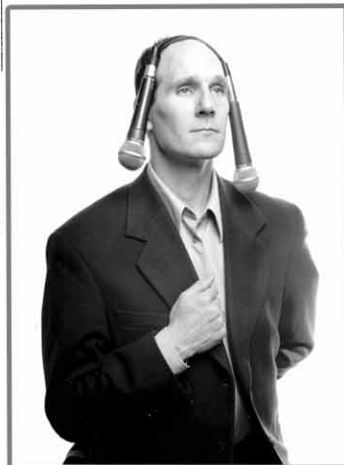
### David Crowe ★★★★★

It's only when you see a stand-up routine as slick and professional yet pant-wettingly funny as this from an American at the top of his game that you realise just how half-baked a lot of British stand-up comedy is.

Crowe is a veteran of US stage and it shows. He has the crowd eating out of the palm of his hand from the start, as he produces a show which manages to blend pratfalls and physical idiocy with acerbic and erudite dissections of politics and religion.

An intelligent, liberal comic from Seattle, Crowe seems equally at home doing dumb-ass one-liners as complex highbrow routines about Shakespeare, managing to pull off both and seamlessly segue between them with a nerdy charisma that is

utterly captivating. With barely a wasted breath, there is so much quality material in this show it's hard to single anything out but Crowe's skit on Americans being gasoholics was a relentlessly side-splitting tirade, up there with the best routines in comedy. A natural with ad-libs and even a dab hand at character comedy (his Las Vegas comedian character had tears running down most faces), Crowe is something of a comedy master. *Doug Johnstone*  
Until Aug 28, Edinburgh Comedy Room (V9), 10.30pm.  
[www.davidcrowe.com](http://www.davidcrowe.com)



David Crowe: Behold, a master

# The Herald

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## FRINGE COMEDY

COLIN SOMERVILLE

**DAVID CROWE, EDINBURGH COMEDY ROOM, TRON BAR**

★★★★★

**CHARLIE PICKERING – BETTERMAN, GILDED BALLOON TEVIOT** ★★★★★

There has been much talk at this Festival of trying to nurture more home-grown comedy talent. Forget altering the structure of competitions such as the Perrier Award, just get them all to go to watch the American comic, David Crowe, at work.

He has a deceptively slight stage presence, but that wiry frame generates a lethal comedy whiplash. A shrewd potted history of the UK sets the tone for some of the sharpest observations on offer in Edinburgh this year – from God using tornados as a vacuum to Hoover up white trash in the midwest, to why a mouse head rather than a moose head on the wall says much more about your ability as a hunter.

Crowe pirouettes in and out of contentious issues with the surefooted assurance of a comedy

Nureyev, while using the microphone to create an impressive array of sound-effects to illustrate many a good point well made: the cost of bottled water compared to petrol being one, and his analysis of the cost to America of being in Iraq another. Some \$300bn sounds much more up close and personal when broken down to \$1000 a head, and allows the introduction of the absurd notion of individual states sponsoring weapons. I mean, that could never happen could it?

Fears over the introduction of comedy characterisation to close the show proved unfounded, as rather than just filler they turned out to provide a surprisingly killer climax.