

The Pokey Hat



Delightful site-specific kids' production incorporating ice cream, excruciating puns and the Italian diaspora

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Ice cream. If there is a more suitable subject for a theatrical performance on a sunny Saturday afternoon, in a park in the east end of Glasgow, in front of a three-generation audience, I can't think what it is.

[Grinagog](#)'s delightful show shoehorns in the history of the Italian diaspora, the back-court culture of the city's tenements, the singular pleasures of a beach holiday on Scotland's west coast, the names of every penny dreadful sweetie ever invented, and lots of excruciating puns. It makes full use of a converted and customised ice cream van, which becomes the window of a flat, the serving counter of a café and the orchestra pit for a musical interlude performed on Irn-Bru bottles.

There is a structure: three characters who run an old-school ice cream van receive an important letter informing them that an inspector will be pitching up to test their ice cream experience, a challenge they must make as sweet and cool and delicious as their fine product. The social history and kola cube reminiscence is tied in with this pressing need to come up with a winning way of presenting a cone.

The twist at the end is just delightful. It turns out that one of the children in the audience is the inspector. The cast approach him with a pokey hat (for those not in the know, a Glasgow term for an ice-cream cone) and present it to him. He, of course, gives it the thumbs up. They have won. Happy days.