

## Edinburgh Fringe 2016 Review: Showstopper!: The Improvised Musical

This year's Showstopper! lives up to high expectations. [Munisha Lall](#) reviews

Friday 26 August 2016



★★★★★

An entirely new musical, created on the spot, every night for a month. That's the premise of *Showstopper!*, an improvisation troupe who have been gaining acclaim far-and-wide since launching on the Fringe seven years ago. The audience is in control, choosing the setting, title and musical theatre composers, whose styles are then pastiched in the show.

For their final Thursday performance, a ghost train, tracks from Glibert & Sullivan, Mary Poppins and High School Musical, and a 'gap year' performer on the side, all came together. The beginning of each performance is the same: the MC receives a (pretend) phone call from Sir Cameron Mackintosh who demands a new musical. The creation of the night: 'What Comes Around Ghosts Around.'

Immediately the six performers and live band launch into song, improvising the lyrics and working to create a 70-minute long narrative, which is as impressive to witness as it sounds. Last year, a bus ride from Edinburgh to London, aptly titled 'a bustling romance', was the audience's concoction for my sitting, and once again, Showstopper! delivered a performance so polished it defies belief.

The sheer ability for the band and performers to communicate without saying a word, develop a story without knowing the conclusion, and sing without having prepared the lyrics, to such a high standard, is fascinating to behold. What's more, the group can't communicate with each other backstage because they're all mic'd up. If they forward-planning in the wings, they're likely to miss out on crucial developments on stage.

The slip-ups too, albeit minor, only add to the show - no one wants to see them saunter though it. A little difficulty in rhyming a lyric or improvising a script only adds to the enjoyment value. After eight musical numbers, a whole lot of audience input, and a three-piece band reeling off every song in the book, the group come to the story's conclusion in perfect time. They certainly know how to put on a show.



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